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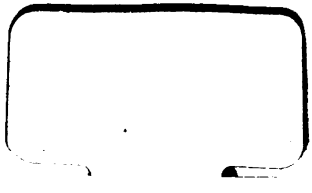

THE

Principles of Religion,

AS PROFESSED BY THE

SOCIETY OF CHRISTIANS,

USUALLY CALLED

QUAKERS.

Written for the Instruction of their Youth, and for the Information of Strangers.

By HENRY TUKE.

From the London Copy, with corrections and additions by the author.

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

ON RELIGION IN GENERAL.

Universal Importance of Religion.—The Belief of God its first principles.—Belief of the Immortality of the Soul.—Universality of these Principles.—Arguments for them.—Faith their best Support.—9

CHAPTER II.

ON THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Nature and design of the Scriptures.—Their claim to our Regard, and to the Belief of their being divinely inspired.—Objections answered—First, to their Genuineness and truth.—Next, to their Inspiration.—All related of good men not intended for imitation.—Impartiality of the Scriptures.—Great Judgment necessary in applying them.—Possibility of placing too much Dependence on them.—Remarks on calling them the Word of God.—13.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

The Fall of Man and Promise of a Redeemer.—Different Modes of Divine Communication to Man.—Prospects and Prophecies of the Gospel Day.—Christ comes among the Jews.—The Benefits of his coming designed to be universal.—Objects of his coming recapitulat-

ed.---Chriſtian Redemption a Work of Love.---Divinity of Chriſt, and of the Holy Spirit.---The Trinity.---Juſtification.---The Reſurrection.---Arguments and Evidences of Chriſtianity.---The true and perfect Chriſtian.—35

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The Gift of the Spirit an Eſſential of Chriſtianity.—Different Names for the Spirit.—Neceſſity of its Aſſiſtance.—Univerſally afforded and in all Ages, but moſt plentifully in the Goſpel.—Unconditional Election and Reprobation diſowned and diſproved.—49.

CHAPTER V.

ON DIVINE WORSHIP AND GOSPEL MINISTRY.

Worſhip an act of the Soul towards God.—Meetings for Worſhip may be held in ſilence.—Public Worſhip an indiſpenſable Duty, reaſonable and beneficial.—Silent Worſhip adapted to all States.—Its Advantages.—Scripture Arguments for it.—Prayer a neceſſary Duty.—The qualifications of Miniſters.—Human Learning not eſſential to the Miniſtry.—No Individual has an excluſive right to aſſume the Exerciſe of it.—Women's Preaching.---Preaching for Hire.---Tithes.—54

CHAPTER VI.

ON BAPTISM AND THE SUPPER.

Preliminary Obſervations.—Two kinds of Baptiſm.—Water and the Spirit.—Remarks on Matt. xxviii. 19.

This and other arguments in favour of Water Baptiſm, anſwered.—Sprinkling not Baptiſm.—Sprinkling of Infants not authoriſed by the Scriptures.—Circumſtances attending it highly objectionable.—The Lord's Supper.—The circumſtances attending it fully admitted.—Not perpetual any more than Waſhing of Feet.—The true Lord's Supper.—Our ſentiments on theſe ſubjects not from a diſeſteem of Chriſtianity, but the reverſe.—83

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE OF DAYS AND TIMES.

Exemption from Cenſure claimed for their Non-obſervance. The Obſervance diſapproved by the Apoſtle Paul.—More injurious than beneficial to Religion, eſpecially Feſtivals. Setting apart one Day in ſeven approved.—On public Faſts, &c.—Concluſion from Rom. xiv. 5, &c.—100.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON OATHS AND WAR.

Quotations from Matt. v.—Oaths unneceſſary.—Arguments in Favour of them anſwered.—Arguments in Favour of War anſwered.—The Chriſtian Religion the only Remedy for this Evil.—104.

CHAPTER IX.

ON AMUSEMENTS.

General remarks on Amuſements.—Rules reſpecting them.—Dancing and Muſic.—Neceſſity of properly regulating Amuſements for Youth.—Propriety of avoiding Temptations.—115.

CHAPTER X.

ON DRESS AND ADDRESS.

Our principle for regulating Dreſs.—Scripture Paſſages in ſupport of it.—An objection anſwered.—Non-conformity to the World to be united with the Transformation of the Mind.—Our peculiarities of Addreſs ſupported by Reaſon, by Propriety, and by Religion.—Reaſon for not taking off the Hat.—Cuſtom too much followed by Chriſtians.—118.

CHAPTER XI.

ON CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

Peaceableneſs of our Principles a Security to Government.—Duties of Subjects.—Suffering peaceably ſubmitted to, when active Compliance cannot be conſcientiouſly rendered.—Civil and religious Liberty valued and how beſt ſupported.—124.

CHAPTER XII.

ON DISCIPLINE.

Neceſſity of Diſcipline in religious Societies.—Objections to it anſwered.—Objects of our Diſcipline enumerated.—Different Meetings in which the Diſcipline is tranſacted.—Importance of tranſacting it in a right Spirit.—127.

CONCLUSION.

Addreſs to the Youth on the Remembrance of their Creator.—Reaſon and Revelation.—The Holy Scriptures and Chriſtianity.—Our peculiar Principles.—The Neceſſity of Regeneration.—Addreſs to Perſons not of our religious Perſuaſion.—134.

INTRODUCTION.

CONSIDERING the many publications that already exiſt, explanatory of the principles of our religious ſociety, it may ſeem to ſome perſons ſuperfluous, to publiſh any thing further on this ſubject. I have, notwithſtanding, been long apprehenſive, that a work is ſtill wanting, which ſhall include the whole, or the moſt material part, of our principles; and in a conciſe, yet perſpicuous manner, convey a ſufficient explanation and defence of them. The ample and excellent apology of Robert Barclay is too diffuſe for the generality of young readers; and it requires a more cloſe and patient attention than many are willing to beſtow. It would, however, in my apprehenſion, amply repay that attention: and I am ſo far from being deſirous to leſſen its uſe, that I wiſh particularly to recommend it to thoſe of our own ſociety, who deſire (what

all ſhould deſire) thoroughly to underſtand their own religious principles. If the language is not modern, it is ſtill correct and clear; if the work is thought too controverſial, we ſhould recollect, that the controverſy is on ſubjects, the right underſtanding of which is intimately connected with our exiſtence as a religious ſociety. The light and miſcellaneous reading of the preſent day, it is to be feared, diſinclines many amongſt us, as well as others, from ſubjects which require cloſe attention and ſerious conſideration; and I wiſh it may not also be a means of weakening the attachment of many to thoſe religious truths, in which our higheſt duty and our deepeſt intereſt conſiſt.

In this work, I have been deſirous of inculcating the general principles of religion, and of Chriſtianity, as well as thoſe which are peculiar to our ſociety; believing, that we can no longer exiſt, with any degree of conſiſtency, than whilſt thoſe principles are maintained, which conſtitute the baſis of the Chriſtian religion. Theſe I conſider to be, faith in God, and a belief of the immortality of the ſoul; a humbling ſenſe of the depravity of human nature, and of the neceſſity and benefits of a Redeemer; that this

Redeemer is Chriſt Jeſus our Lord; that what the evangeliſts and apoſtles have written concerning him, is true, both in relation to his humanity and his Divinity, as well as their accounts of his many mighty works and miracles; his having, through the eternal Spirit, offered himſelf unto God for us, as a propitiation for our ſins; and ſent the Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, to convince the world of ſin, of righteouſneſs, and of judgment; and to guide into all truth.

In treating of the Holy Scriptures, I have particularly endeavoured to obviate the principal objections made againſt them; ſince it is by attempting to invalidate their authenticity and divine authority, that the enemies of the Chriſtian religion attack our faith. I have introduced the ſubject of the Scriptures, previously to the chapter on the Chriſtian religion; conſidering, that if the authenticity and veracity, to ſay nothing of the divine authority, of theſe writings, be eſtabliſhed, it is then neceſſary only to ſhow, what Chriſtianity is, according to the Scriptures. A few arguments are, however, added, in ſupport of the Chriſtian religion.

With reſpect to thoſe principles, which are peculiar to our religious ſociety, I hope that,

however ſingular they may appear to ſome, they will, on cloſe examination, be found conſiſtent with the nature and ſpirit of the goſpel diſpenſation. The conviction of this conſiſtency has been increaſed on my mind, by the inveſtigation which the writing of this work has occaſioned; and, I truſt, we are able to give ſuch reaſons for our diſſent from other Chriſtians, as may at leaſt excuſe it to thoſe from whom we differ.

Although very little is quoted in this work from any books, but thoſe of the holy Scriptures, it may be proper to ſay, that I am indebted to the writings of others, for many of the arguments which I have advanced. At a time when ſo much has been written, and well written, on theſe ſubjects, it is not to be expected that many freſh arguments can be brought forward. Some new matter will, nevertheleſs, be found. The principle object aimed at in this work is, to digeſt what has been produced by reading and reflection, and to deliver it in ſuch a manner, as may briefly, yet clearly, convey the ſentiments deſigned to be inculcated. How far this object has been attained, is not for me to determine.

I wiſh not, by any thing I have written, to

promote a ſpirit of controverſy: on the contrary, I deſire the increaſe of that mutual charity, which it is alike our duty and our intereſt to cheriſh. To ſpeak what we apprehend to be truth, is, however, ſometimes neceſſary; and always ſo, if we ſpeak at all. If we do this, as we ought to do, in love; and it is received in the ſame ſpirit; we may be the means of ſtirring up the pure mind in each other; and of promoting our "growing up in Him, in all things, who is the Head, even Chriſt."*

* Ephes. iv. 15.

CHAPTER I.

ON RELIGION IN GENERAL.

Univerſal Importance of Religion.—The Belief of God its firſt principle.—Next of the Immortality of the Soul.—Univerſality of theſe Principles.—Arguments for them.—Faith their beſt Support.

RELIGION is a ſubject which involves ſo much, both of the duty and intereſt of mankind, that there is no ſituation in life, which can exempt us from the conſiderations and obligations it impoſes upon us; or render ſuperfluous thoſe ſources of enjoyment and conſolation, which it affords to its true and humble poſſeſſors.

The firſt principle of all religion is, the belief of a Supreme Being, diſtinguiſhed by the name of GOD: a being, who is the original creator of all things; who hath all power in his hands; is perfect in wiſdom and knowledge; is juſt and equal in all his ways; and whoſe tender mercies are over all his works. He knoweth our moſt ſecret actions, words, and thoughts; for there is nothing hid from him, with whom we have to do.

The next principle of religion is, the belief of the immortality of the ſoul of man, and a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, in which the great diſtinction will be made betwixt the righteous and the wicked; thoſe inequalities which appear

in this probationary ſtate will be removed; and a recompence be given to every man according to his works.

Although theſe principles of religion are not attended with that kind of evidence, which the objects of our external ſenſes generally afford; yet it is not a little remarkable, that there are ſcarcely any other ſubjects, which have obtained ſo general belief and perſuaſion amongſt mankind, though often mixed with many groſs ideas. They are principles ſo interwoven with our natures, that it ſeems to indicate an extraordinary debaſement, or perverſion of mind, not to entertain truths ſo univerſally felt and acknowledged. They are, however, principles which may be ſupported by arguments, drawn from the nature of things; and notwithſtanding the general conſent to them, it may be proper to bring forward a few of theſe arguments.

The exiſtence of a Supreme Being, the creator of heaven and earth, is evident from the works of creation. The magnificence of ſome of theſe works; the regularity and order with which they move in their appointed ſtations; the beauty and uſe attendant upon others, with the important purpoſes which are accompliſhed by them, particularly to the animal creation; evince ſo clearly both deſign and power, as to afford an inſuperable argument in favour of a great firſt cauſe, perfect in wiſdom and goodneſs, as well as in power. To theſe conſiderations may be added, the wonderful arrangement of the animal economy: the different parts, adapted to their different purpoſes with

extraordinary exactneſs and advantage, clearly manifeſt a deſigner poſſeſſed of omnipotence and wiſdom; the contemplation of which might well induce the pious pſalmiſt to addreſs his Maker in this emphatic language: "I will praiſe thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my ſoul knoweth right well."* Thus alſo a conſideration of the other works of creation, induced the ſame pſalmiſt to celebrate his Maker's praiſe: "The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament ſhoweth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth ſpeech, and night unto night ſhoweth knowledge. There is no ſpeech nor language where their voice is not heard."† And again: "O Lord! how manifold are thy works; in wiſdom haſt thou made them all."‡ §

Nor are we without arguments for our immortality, and a future ſtate of retribution, the belief of which is, as it were, the ſoul of religion: for when we have entertained ſuitable ideas of a Supreme Being; when we feel thoſe aſpirations unto him, and thoſe deſires to unite with him, which frequently ariſe in our hearts; and particularly when we look at the ſtate of the righteous

* Pſalm cxxxix. 14. † Pſalm xix. 1, 2, 3.
‡ Pſalm civ. 24.

§ If any perſon ſhould think it irregular, to bring forward paſſages from the ſcriptures, before their authority has been proved; it may be obſerved, that theſe paſſages are not advanced as arguments, but as elucidations, in the ſame manner as any other writing might be quoted.

and the wicked in this world; we have ſufficient reaſon to conclude, that there is a part in man which is immortal; and that there muſt be a future ſtate, in which virtue and vice will meet with their reſpective rewards, in a more ſignal manner than they appear to receive in this life; and which prove God to be juſt and equal in all his ways, and righteous in all his thoughts.

But, notwithſtanding theſe and other arguments, which might be adduced in ſupport of thoſe two firſt principles of religion, the ſoul ſeems moſt fully to reſt upon and enjoy them, when they are felt as objects of faith, rather than of reaſon. They then become like ſelf-evident truths, for which our own feelings are the beſt ſupport, and which act in concert with that declaration: "Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God; for he that cometh to him muſt believe that he is; and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him."* And we ought ever to remember, after all our reaſonings on theſe ſubjects, that "Life and immortality are brought to light by the goſpel."†

* Heb. xi. 6. † 2 Tim. i. 10.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Nature and deſign of the Scriptures.—Their claim to our Regard, and to the Belief of their being divinely inſpired.—Objections anſwered—Firſt, to their Genuineneſs and truth.—Next, to their Inſpiration.—All related of good men not intended for imitation.—Impartiality of the Scriptures.—Great Judgment neceſſary in applying them.—Poſſibility of placing too much Dependence on them.—Remarks on calling them the Word of God.

THESE writings are divided into two parts, the Old and the New Teſtaments. They commence with an account of the creation of the world, and contain a hiſtory of more than four thouſand years. Their object appears to be, to exhibit the various diſpenſations of God to mankind; to manifeſt many of his general and particular acts of Providence; to ſhow the good effects of religion and virtue; and to ſet forth the lamentable evils which are the conſequence of walking in the paths of irreligion and profaneneſs. For the prevention of theſe evils, the ſcriptures inculcate thoſe principles of piety and morality, which contribute to the happineſs of mankind, both here and hereafter; and there is not any general duty, religious or moral, in which they do not afford inſtruction and direction.

The ſcriptures alſo contain many remarkable

predictions concerning nations and individuals, with several prophecies of the coming of the Messiah, and of the dispensation of the gospel. Antient history, both sacred and profane, gives account of circumstances which show the fulfilling of many of these predictions; and the New Testament particularly relates the completion of those, which are given concerning "Him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write."*

When we consider who were the writers of these volumes; what are the subjects; and what appear to be the objects of them; they claim at first view a high degree of regard and esteem. But when, as Christians, we believe in a divine influence and direction, we find abundant cause to conclude, that this influence was extended to those who wrote or compiled the scriptures, and therefore believe with the apostle Paul, that they were "given by inspiration of God;"† and are productive of those important advantages which he attaches to them.

But notwithstanding the strong belief which is generally entertained of the truth of these writings, and of their having been communicated under the influence of divine inspiration; there are persons, who do not acknowledge one or both of these claims to that credibility and reverence which are attached to the scriptures. It will therefore be necessary to pay some attention to the objections advanced by these persons; in doing which it may

* John i. 45. † Tim. iii. 16.

be proper, firſt to conſider those which are made againſt the authenticity of the scriptures.

Theſe objections may be divided into two claſſes.

1.—To the writings, as the genuine productions of the authors to whom they are ascribed.

2.—To the works themselves, as being a true hiſtory.

With reſpect to the objection againſt their genuineneſs, in relation to their imputed authors, if it could in some caſes be well ſupported, it would by no means invalidate either the truth or the inspiration of these writings; because the books do not always declare their authors. They have, however, been transmitted through so regular a channel of evidence, by a people for whom they were eſpecially written, and by whom they were religiouſly preſerved, as to render it as indubitable as any thing of the kind can be, that they were written by thoſe to whom they are aſcribed. In ſome cases the authors may be conſidered as dubious; and seeing that, in these instances, the books are not imputed in ſcripture to any individual, no objection can reasonably be made on this ground.

An objection is ſometimes made to the ſuppoſed author, on account of his ſpeaking of himſelf in the third perſon; but this cannot have much weight, when it is conſidered that it is a mode of writing not peculiar to them, but has been adopted by other hiſtorians, whose works have been generally admitted without diſputation.

Another more plauſible reaſon for disputing

the authors, ariſes from ſome places being mentioned by names, which appear to have been given to them ſubſequent to the alleged writer's exiſtence; or from ſaying, that a place is called by a particular name "to this day," with other ſimilar expreſſions. Now all this is eaſily obviated by conſidering, what is generally admitted, that, after the Babylonian captivity, Ezra reviſed the Jewiſh ſcriptures; and it appears, that, in ſome inſtances, he either made use of modern names, or added remarks of his own to elucidate the hiſtory. He was a religious character, and one whom the Jews conſidered as acting under divine direction; they therefore received his comments, and added them, if he did not do it himſelf, to the original text. This is a fact which the Jews acknowledge, and accounts for the causes of this objection in ſuch a manner, as muſt, I apprehend, be ſatisfactory to every impartial mind.

The account of the death of Moſes, at the end of Deuteronomy, was probably added by Joſhua or Samuel, to complete the hiſtory of Moſes in those books that were written by him; and is a circumſtance which no reaſonable man, who is acquainted with literary publications, would make a ground of objection to the authenticity of any book.

Nor are the objections to the truth of the matters related in the holy ſcriptures, of more weight than thoſe alleged againſt their authenticity. They arise from ſome apparent inconſiſtencies of one part with another, and from a ſuppoſed difference in ſome inſtances, from other hiſtories.

In moſt caſes, the inconſiſtencies objected are only in appearance; they may be, and indeed have been, removed by a critical examination of the ſubjects; and if we admit a few to ariſe from incorrectneſs in tranſcribers or tranſlators, ſurely no wiſe man would conſider ſuch a circumſtance as a reaſonable ground for rejecting even writings much leſs authenticated than theſe. As to the few variations from other writers, if they cannot otherwiſe be reconciled, a fair conſideration of the probability, which of them had the beſt means of information, will, I believe, give a clear preference to the ſacred hiſtorian. But the ſcriptures are in general found to be well ſupported by other authors; and, what is worthy of obſervation, the completion of prophecies, recorded in various parts of holy writ, is confirmed by profane hiſtorians of good credit, who, it muſt be admitted, could have had no inducement to give any unfair teſtimony in their favour.*

That ſome verbal difficulties ſhould occur in a collection of books, which were written from more than one thouſand ſeven hundred, to upwards of three thouſand years ago, and which contain a hiſtory of above four thouſand years, is what may reaſonably be expected; but that writings of ſuch antiquity ſhould come down to us ſo perfect as they appear to be, is cauſe of admiration;

* For the truth of theſe aſſertions, ſee Grotius on the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, 3 Sect. 14 and 16. Newton on the Prophecies, and Prettyman on the Study of the Bible.

and, conſidering their intereſting importance, of gratitude and praiſe.

Having, I hope, ſufficiently obviated the moſt plauſible objections, that are made againſt the truth and credibility of the ſcriptures, the next circumſtance to be conſidered is, their inſpiration; by which I underſtand, that the writers or compilers were influenced by the Holy Spirit, in communicating theſe writings. A conſiderable part of them are given as expreſs communications from the Almighty to his ſervants and prophets: this, if we admit the truth of the relation, determines a large proportion of the bible to be an immediate revelation, which is more, as to the degree, than is neceſſarily implied by the term inſpiration.

The reaſons for conſidering theſe writings, as being given under that divine influence which is called inſpiration, are the following:

1.—The characters of the writers, all of whom, that we can aſcertain, were men, eminently endowed with divine gifts; and who appear to have drawn up these writings for the uſe and edification of the church of God; in doing which we may reasonably conclude, that his aſſiſtance would be fought for and afforded.

2.—The character of Ezra, who, beſides being the writer of at leaſt one book, collected the various writings of the Old Teſtament, with the exception of two or three books not then written.†

† Theſe are Nehemiah and Malachi, and perhaps Eſther with part of Chronicles. They are generally ſuppoſed to have been added by Simon the juſt.

His character, gifts, and motives, all lead us to the ſame concluſion as before; with this addition, that as the authors, or the occaſion of ſome part of theſe writings, are not clearly aſcertained, Ezra's compilation under divine influence, gives an additional ſanction to theſe Books.

3.—The teſtimony of the apoſtle Paul, who ſays, "All ſcripture is given by inſpiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, &c.* and when we

* I am aware, that ſome perſons endeavour to ſet aſide the force of this paſſage, by ſtating that one Greek manuſcript, and ſome antient verſions, omit the *και*, in Engliſh *and*; by which they would give a different meaning to the paſſage. In anſwer to this, it may be obſerved,

1.—That for one Greek manuſcript which wants the *και*, or *and*, there are great numbers which have it; and that one is neither ſo antient, nor of ſo good credit as moſt of the others, in the opinion of many critics. Now, to ſet all other manuſcripts aſide, and prefer a ſingle and leſs authenticated reading, with two or three tranſlations, which, though they may be antient, can by no means be conſidered of equal validity with ſo many copies in the original tongue, would be an exerciſe of criticism, which nothing but a partial predilection to a preconceived opinion would adopt. Would theſe critics admit ſuch arguments in favour of the authenticity of 1 John v. 7.?

2.—The context requires a ſenſe, which implies that the apoſtle conſidered that all which he had juſt called the holy ſcriptures were inſpired. Antient commentators, even thoſe who have made uſe of the verſions which have

conſider the opportunities and abilities of this apoſtle, for judging in ſuch a caſe (to ſay nothing of

not the *and*, ſtill conſider the paſſage as implying, that the whole ſcripture was divinely inſpired. So that ſuppoſing (what however is not admitted,) that the *και* was not in the original, the ſenſe is ſtill the ſame. For the more clear elucidation of the ſubject, let us read the whole paſſage, as theſe objectors would render it. "From a child thou haſt known the holy ſcriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto ſalvation, through faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus. All ſcripture (or every writing) given by inſpiration of God, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furniſhed unto all good works." Now every one that reads this paſſage impartially, and conſiders the conſtruction of the ſentences correctly, muſt, I apprehend, admit, that the holy ſcriptures, mentioned in the beginning of the paragraph, are included in the general obſervations reſpecting "all ſcripture given by inſpiration;" or that "all ſcripture given by inſpiration," only alluded to "the holy ſcriptures" mentioned juſt before. In either caſe the inference is clear, that the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament, which are all that were then called the holy ſcriptures, were conſidered by the apoſtle as divinely inſpired; and as anſwering to the character he gives in the 16th verſe. It may be further obſerved, that without the *και*, the paſſage may be tranſlated thus: "all (or the whole) ſcripture being divinely inſpired,

his own inſpiration,) his teſtimony appears to be an inſurmountable argument in favour of thoſe

is profitable," &c. "Omnis ſcriptura, divinitus inſpirata, utilis eſt," &c. Latin Vulgate.

3.—The ſenſe is, however, more clear, and unequivocal, by the well ſupported reading of the word *και*, or *and*, as given in our tranſlation. This ſenſe contains the reaſon why the holy ſcriptures were able to make Timothy wiſe unto ſalvation; but ſuppoſing the meaning ſimply to be, that all ſcripture, which is divinely inſpired, is profitable, &c. without any connexion with the preceding verſe, the poſition would become an unconnected truiſm; as no doubt could be entertained, that all ſcripture which was divinely inſpired, was thus profitable. Beſides, this meaning would leave Timothy, and every other reader, in uncertainty, which part of the ſcripture was, and which was not inſpired: it offers no rule to diſtinguiſh them. But had this been the apoſtle's meaning, there was a fair occaſion, and indeed a call upon him, to offer ſome means of diſtinction.

From all theſe conſiderations, I am induced to believe, that the conſtruction given by our tranſlators, is ſupportable, by not only nearly all the Greek manuſcripts, but by the juſt rules of criticiſm; and by every other reaſonable conſideration of which the ſubject is capable. See this matter further diſcuſſed by Findlay, on the Inſpiration of the Jewiſh Scriptures, in anſwer to Dr. Geddes.

For the ſake of ſome of my readers, it may be proper to take notice of an objection, which has been made from Robert Barclay, having, in his apology, quoted the

writings, concerning which he bore this teſtimony.

4.—Although the latter arguments are applicable only to the Old Teſtament; yet the firſt relates to both; and it is presumed, that none but Jews, who acknowledge the inſpiration of the Old Teſtament, will deny it to the New. The exception which the apoſtle Paul makes, in an inſtance or two, to his writing by commandment, is a proof of *his* writings at leaſt being divinely inſpired.

After giving these reaſons, I ſhall proceed to

paſſage without the *and*; "All ſcripture given by inſpiration of God is profitable, &c." In anſwer to this, it may be obſerved, that Robert Barclay originally wrote and publiſhed his apology in Latin, and generally quoted the texts of ſcripture from the Latin vulgate, of which this is a tranſlation. Whether he preferred this rendering or not, yet, if we may judge from what he has written on the ſcriptures, there is no reaſon to believe, he doubted the inſpiration of any part of them. He begins his Theſis on the Scriptures, thus: "From theſe revelations of the Spirit of God to the ſaints, have proceeded the ſcriptures of truth;" and this he applies to the hiſtorical, as well as to the prophetical, doctrinal, and exhortatory parts of the Old and the New Teſtaments.

It is hoped that the importance of the ſubject of this note, will excuſe its length. To have incorporated it in the body of the work, would not have been ſo ſuitable for many readers.

conſider the principal objections to this inſpiration, which I apprehend to be,

1.—That ſome of the matters related, are of too trivial a nature to be the ſubjects of divine inſpiration.

2.—That ſome others appear ſo inconſiſtent with the nature of the Divine Being, as to render it altogether improbable, that he ever warranted what is there expreſſed.

With reſpect to the firſt objection, I believe we are by no means competent judges. The Old Teſtament, to which this objection may be principally made, was not primarily written for us of the preſent day; but for a people who had many peculiar cuſtoms and ceremonies, and to whom many things might be important, that to us may appear of a trifling nature. Nor is it improbable, that much of what theſe objectors conſider as trifling, may to others of their contemporaries, be both important and inſtructive. The pious and humble mind will often derive inſtruction from many of the works of divine Providence, which may be overlooked by the vain and faſtidious as not worthy of their notice.

The ſecond objection, it is apprehended, meant principally to apply to thoſe paſſages in the Old Teſtament, where the Almighty is repreſented as authoriſing the deſtruction of man by man. This is an objection not only to the inſpiration, but to the truth of the ſcriptures; and, though it appears to be the ſtrong hold of the enemies of the bible, it is by no means impregnable. It has, indeed, been often attacked and reduced; but ſuch is their

fondneſs for it, that they are continually rebuilding and reſorting to it.

In replying to this objection, it may be proper, firſt, to conſider the command of God to Abraham, to offer up his ſon Iſaac, which has been much inſiſted on, as favouring human ſacrifices, and as an argument againſt the ſcriptures. It ſtands recorded as a trial of Abraham's faith: and as, after his full reſignation, his hand was ſtayed from the performance of the act; I am at a loſs to conceive what inference can be drawn from this circumſtance, derogatory to the character of the Divine Being; or of thoſe writings which repreſent him as putting the righteous patriarch's love and obedience to this great trial. Had the ſacrifice been actually made, the objection to it might have had more appearance of validity; but as the caſe is repreſented, and no doubt rightly repreſented, it appears to afford an argument againſt, rather than for, human ſacrifices. The conduct of Abraham is mentioned, both in the Old and the New Teſtament, with the moſt marked approbation; and it has obtained for the obedient patriarch, the diſtinguiſhed character of "the friend of God."*

The command given to the Iſraelites, to make war on the Canaanites, and to deſtroy them, is an objection, which, it is difficult to conceive, how it can be ſeriouſly urged by thoſe who conſider war to be lawful, even under the Chriſtian diſpenſation. War is generally allowed to be one of thoſe judgments, by which Divine Providence hath often

* James ii. 23.

afflicted a guilty nation; and, in the inſtances on which the objection is founded, this appears to have been remarkably the caſe. They were indeed judgments which had been mercifully protracted. Thus we read, that the poſſeſſion of the promiſed land by Abraham, or his poſterity, was deferred for ſeveral generations, becauſe "the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full;"* although there is reaſon to believe from this expreſſion, as well as from other circumſtances, that their ſins were then very great. This is further elucidated by the command given to the Iſraelites, to abſtain from many evil practices (ſome of them of the groſſeſt kind,) of which the nations whom they were to expel, were guilty. Theſe Moſes plainly mentions as the cauſe of their expulſion; warning the Iſraelites, at the ſame time, againſt ſimilar conduct, which would produce ſimilar judgments. "Defile not ye yourſelves in any of theſe things; for in all theſe things the nations are defiled, which I caſt out before you. And the land is defiled; therefore I do viſit the iniquity thereof upon it; and the land itſelf vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye ſhall therefore keep my ſtatutes and my judgments, and ſhall not commit any of theſe abominations; that the land ſpue not you out alſo, when ye defile it, as it ſpued out the nations that were before you."†

This ſubject is alſo placed in a clear and forcible point of view by the remonſtrance of Moſes, as related in the ninth chapter of Deuteronomy;

* Gen. xv. 16. † Lev. xviii. 24.

where, after cautioning the people againſt any preſumptuous conceits of their own merits, he expreſsly ſays to them; "Not for thy righteouſneſs, or for the uprightneſs of thy heart, doſt thou go to poſſeſs the land; but for the wickedneſs of theſe nations, doth the Lord thy God drive them out before thee."*

The caſe of Agag has alſo been brought forward to ſupport the objection, which we have now under conſideration; but in this inſtance we have again a cauſe aſſigned for the judgment executed: "As thy ſword hath made women childleſs, ſo ſhall thy mother be childleſs among women."† From this expreſſion there is reaſon to ſuppoſe, that Agag had been remarkable for his violence and cruelty, which brought this judgment juſtly upon him.

It has been alleged, that theſe pretenſions to Divine commands were only a cloak for ambition and cruelty. But this cannot reaſonably be ſuppoſed to be the caſe, when it is conſidered that theſe judgments were not confined to the heathen nations; but that ſimilar ones were alſo threatened and executed upon the Iſraelites themſelves. Although they were a people diſtinguiſhed by many peculiar favours, yet when they departed from the law and commandment of their God, and degenerated into idolatry and wickedneſs, they became the ſubjects of divine retribution. Thus the prophet Iſaiah expoſtulates with them: "Who gave Jacob for a ſpoil, and Iſrael to the robber?

* Deut. ix. 5. † 1 Sam. xv. 33.

Did not the Lord, he againſt whom we have ſinned? For they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient to his law; therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the ſtrength of battle."* Even Moſes their leader in theſe ſuppoſed ſchemes of ambition, denounced, in the moſt ample manner, the judgments which would be the conſequence of their diſobedience to the law of their God. See Lev. xxvi. 14, &c. Deut. xxviii. 15, &c.

When we conſider the peculiar humility and diſintereſtedneſs of Moſes, in refuſing to be called the ſon of Pharaoh's daughter, in the great reluctance with which he accepted the government of the Iſraelites; in preferring their forgiveneſs and preſervation to his own aggrandizement, or that of his family; and in the ſingular liberality he manifeſted, when Eldad and Medad were complained of for propheſying in the camp; when all theſe circumſtances, I ſay, are conſidered, there ſeems no ground whatever to ſuſpect Moſes of either ambition or cruelty: we perceive, on the contrary, the propriety of the diſtinguiſhed character given of him, by ſome pious tranſcriber of the Pentateuch: "Now the man Moſes was very meek, above all the men which lived on the face of the earth."†

Thus we ſee that the Lord's ways are equal; and that thoſe judgments upon the Canaanites were not the exerciſe of a capricious ſeverity; but adminiſtered under circumſtances, which perfectly

* Iſaiah xlii. 24. † Numb. xii. 3.

reconcile them to thoſe principles of juſtice and mercy, which we conſider among the moſt diſtinguiſhed attributes of the Deity. And though, in many inſtances, the innocent may ſeem to ſuffer equally with the guilty, yet this is no more than is generally the caſe in other public calamities: even in thoſe moſt remarkable ones, the univerſal deluge, and the deſtruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, many innocent children muſt have ſuffered with their guilty parents. In conſidering theſe caſes, we ſhould ever remember, that whatever public afflictions may be directed for the puniſhment of nations, it is in a future life, that the grand diſtinction is made between individuals; and that "God will render to every man according to his deeds."*

If ſome of thoſe who, with myſelf, conſider war altogether inconſiſtent with the Chriſtian diſpenſation, ſhould argue from the unchangeableneſs of the divine nature, that the Almighty could not allow of, or enjoin practices in one age, which are inconſiſtent in another; it may and ought to be obſerved, that, in his diſpenſations to mankind, great variety is evident; and many things which were not only allowed, but commanded, in former times, and under different circumſtances, would now be improper.

It alſo appears, that when our bleſſed Lord ſet forth the peaceableneſs of the goſpel diſpenſation, he ſhowed that a contrary conduct had been more than permitted in former times; and unleſs we in-

* Romans iii. 6.

tend to controvert the propriety of the manner, in which the Author of the Chriſtian religion propagated it, we muſt allow, that there have been times, in which divers things were lawful that are now unlawful; and which admits the conſiſtency of the Jewiſh wars with the Divine will. "Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I ſay unto you, reſiſt not evil." Again, "Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, thou ſhalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy;* but I ſay unto you, love your enemies," &c. Now, when we conſider the expreſſions juſt cited, and obſerve the obvious difference they make betwixt the diſpenſations of the law and of the goſpel; we may find abundant reaſon to believe, that it was not inconſiſtent with the divine nature and will, to command thoſe things which are related reſpecting the wars of the Jews.

If any credibility is due to the writings of Moſes, and they have all the claim to credibility which writings of that antiquity well can have; it is evident that thoſe wars *were* commanded by the Almighty. And when we conſider, that we have no leſs ſupport for the authority of Moſes than our Lord himſelf; that he and his apoſtles always mention him with evident tokens of their confi-

* The words "hate thine enemy," do not appear in the Old Teſtament; perhaps they were added by the ſcribes as a gloſs; however, our Lord, by his recital, acknowledges them, as not inconſiſtent with the former diſpenſation.

during him divinely directed; we muſt, in denying the authority of Moſes, alſo deny that of Chriſt and his apoſtles. A conſequence, from the idea of which every Chriſtian muſt revolt.

Let us, therefore, be content with that evidence of the divine will which is afforded us; and rather than impugn the former diſpenſations of God to mankind, be thankful to him for having introduced one ſo much more excellent, in which "Glory to God in the higheſt," is peculiarly united with "Peace on earth, and good will to men."

But whilſt I have been endeavouring to remove theſe objections, I have regretted that there ſhould be any neceſſity, thus to "juſtify the ways of God to man," as recorded in holy writ; and to endeavour to ſupport the cauſe of that Omnipotent Being, whoſe prerogative alone it is, "that he giveth no account of any of his matters." He has, notwithſtanding, as far as different circumſtances will permit, condeſcended to adapt his diſpenſations towards mankind, to thoſe principles of wiſdom, juſtice, and mercy, which are the rules of our conduct towards each other. If, in ſome inſtances, we cannot perceive this conſiſtency, the infinite diſparity betwixt the Divine Being and his creature man, might reaſonably induce us to expect difficulties of this kind; and ſurely the wiſdom, no more than the faith, of thoſe is to be admired, who reject every thing reſpecting an infinite Being, that does not comport with their finite capacities. "Canſt thou, by ſearching, find out God? Canſt thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is as

high as heaven; what canſt thou do? Deeper than hell; what canſt thou know? The meaſure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the ſea. If he cut off, and ſhut up, and gather together, then who can hinder him?"*

But, in admitting the holy ſcriptures to have been communicated to us under Divine influence or inſpiration, it is not neceſſary to conſider all that is related in them, concerning even thoſe whoſe general conduct might entitle them to the character of good men, as intended for our imitation. In many inſtances, indeed, their conduct is very properly and impartially cenſured; and this impartiality conſtitutes one of the many excellencies of the Bible. But there are alſo circumſtances ſimply related, without any comment, which it is by no means requiſite to conſider as related with approbation, or authorizing a ſimilar conduct in us. A cloſe and critical examination into the relation of ſome of theſe caſes, would probably remove much of the impreſſion which a ſlighter conſideration may have ſometimes produced. At any rate, neither the ſacred hiſtorian, nor that inſpiration under which he is ſuppoſed to write, is chargeable with ſuch circumſtances. Here, however, we have again occaſion for the exerciſe of our gratitude, in that it has pleaſed Divine Providence to give us an exiſtence under a diſpenſation, which requires greater degrees of purity and uprightneſs of conduct; and which exceeds all former ones in the excellence of its morality, as well as in the

* Job xi. 7.

peculiar peaceableneſs of its principles, and the ſpirituality of its worſhip.

Great judgment is alſo neceſſary in applying the ſcriptures to the ſupport of religious doctrines and obſervances. Theſe have been, I apprehend, ſometimes adopted from what may be rather incidentally mentioned, than inculcated. In conſidering the ſcriptures, and endeavouring to build ſyſtems upon them, it requires great care to diſtinguiſh thoſe things which are univerſal and eſſential, from ſuch as are only of a temporary or local nature. For want of an attention of this kind, many unprofitable diſputes (to ſay no worſe of them) have ariſen among the profeſſors of Chriſtianity; and much unneceſſary ſtreſs laid on things which the Chriſtian religion does not enjoin or require.

Highly however as thoſe writings are to be valued, and highly indeed we do eſteem them, there is not only a poſſibility, but a danger of placing too much dependence upon them, by preferring them to that Divine Spirit, or principle of light and life afforded to man, of which they teſtify; and concerning which I ſhall treat in a ſucceeding chapter. Thus the Jews in the days of our bleſſed Saviour's perſonal appearance on earth, paid great attention to the ſcriptures; and at the ſame time did not believe in him, "of whom Moſes in the law, and the prophets did write." On this account our Lord reproves them in this manner: "Search (or, ye ſearch) the ſcriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which teſtify of me; and ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." Now it is

that, from which the ſcriptures proceeded, and to which they amply bear witneſs as the means of ſalvation, which we apprehend there is a danger of neglecting; and of dwelling upon the letter, without a proper regard to the ſpirit; a danger againſt which the ſcriptures themſelves contain many ſalutary cautions.

There is alſo a name by which the holy ſcriptures are frequently diſtinguiſhed, which appears to be in divers reſpects exceptionable, namely, The Word of God. This is an appellation which is otherwiſe applied in thoſe writings; and it tends to create a confuſion of ideas, unneceſſarily to denominate ſeveral ſubjects by the ſame name. Chriſt is called, The Word of God.* The term † is alſo applied to that holy principle or ſpirit, by which he carries on the work of ſalvation in the hearts of true Chriſtians; and frequently to the preaching of the goſpel; but by applying it to the ſacred writings, a miſapplication of paſſages in them is frequently occaſioned. That theſe writings contain the words of God, we readily admit; but we think it ſafeſt, as well as moſt proper, to deſignate them by that appellation, by which the apoſtle has diſtinguiſhed them; and by way of priority to all other writings, to ſtyle them, The holy Scriptures; concerning which we believe with Paul, that they were "given by inſpiration of God; and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſ-

* Rev. xix. 13.

† Heb. iv. 12. 1 Pet. i. 23. 1 John ii. 14.

neſs; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furniſhed unto all good works."*

CHAPTER III.

ON THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

The Fall of Man and Promiſe of a Redeemer.—Different Modes of Divine Communication to Man.—Proſpects and Prophecies of the Goſpel Day.—Chriſt comes among the Jews.—The Benefits of his coming deſigned to be univerſal.—Objects of his coming recapitulated.—Chriſtian Redemption a Work of Love.—Divinity of Chriſt, and of the Holy Spirit.—The Trinity.—Juſtification.—The Reſurrection.—Arguments and Evidences of Chriſtianity.—The true and perfect Chriſtian.

HAVING eſtabliſhed the truth and divine authority of the ſcriptures, we next proceed to the conſideration of the moſt important doctrines of the Chriſtian Religion.

Man having, by diſobedience to the divine command, loſt that ſtate of innocence and purity in which he was originally created; and having thereby ſubjected himſelf and his offſpring to ſin and miſery; it pleaſed his gracious and merciful Creator, in the riches of his love, early to point out, and to promiſe a Redeemer. This was done at the

* 2 Tim. iii. 16.

very time when ſentence was pronounced on our firſt parents for their tranſgreſſion; for then their tempter and ſeducer received this judgment: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman; and between thy ſeed and her ſeed; it ſhall bruiſe thy head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel."*

But notwithſtanding the promiſe was thus early made, many ages elapſed before it pleaſed God completely to fulfil it: during which time, however, he did not leave mankind wholly to themſelves; but, by the miniſtration of angels, by that holy Spirit which was more plentifully to be poured forth in the Chriſtian diſpenſation, and by other means, he communicated his will to the children of men: ſtriving with and reproving the ungodly becauſe of their iniquities, as well as exhorting and comforting the righteous under thoſe trials, unto which this probationary ſtate, and in ſome inſtances, the love and the fear of their God, rendered them liable. Typical offerings and ſacrifices for ſin were alſo eſtabliſhed, in alluſion to that one offering, by which "he hath now perfected for ever them that are ſanctified."†

Among other ſources of conſolation, was the proſpect which was at times given to the patriarchs and prophets, of the day of Chriſt, and of the excellence of his diſpenſation; concerning which we have many predictions left upon record, abundantly ſetting forth thoſe advantages which were deſigned to mankind by him, whom we have repreſented to us as the Sent of the Father. By

* Gen. iii. 15. † Heb. x. 14.

theſe prophecies, as well as by the types of the Moſaic law, the minds of many were gradually prepared for the reception of the promiſed Meſſiah; and many there appear to have been, who, with Simeon and Anna, "waited for the conſolation of Iſrael, and looked for redemption in Jeruſalem,"* by the coming of him, who was peculiarly propheſied of, as "a light to lighten the gentiles," as well as for "the glory of his people Iſrael."††

Thus, "when the fulneſs of the time was come, God ſent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law,"† from thoſe ceremonious obſervances, which were deſigned to be as a "Schoolmaſter to bring them to Chriſt."‡ But the great object of Chriſt's coming was by no means confined to the Jewiſh people; amongſt whom, and by whom, he ſuffered that ignominious death, by which it hath pleaſed God (and ſurely it ought to ſuffice us, that it has thus pleaſed him,) "to reconcile all things to himſelf."§

The evangelical prophet, above ſeven hundred years before our Saviour's perſonal appearance on earth, ſpeaking in the name of the Almighty, declares, "It is a light thing, that thou ſhouldeſt be my ſervant, to raiſe up the tribes of Jacob, and to reſtore the preſerved of Iſrael: I will alſo give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayeſt be my ſalvation unto the end of the

* Luke ii. 25, 38. †† Iſa. xlii. 6. Luke ii. 32.
† Gal. iv. 4. ‡ Gal iii. 24. § Col. i. 20.

earth."* Conſonant with this gracious prediction, are theſe declarations of the apoſtle John, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." "That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world †." "He is the propitiation for our ſins; and not for ours only, but alſo for the ſins of the whole world."‡ Many are the prophecies concerning the univerſal extent of the benefits of Chriſt's coming, the accompliſhment of which is fully borne witneſs to, by the writers of the New Teſtament. This is particularly and frequently done by Paul, who, being, in an eſpecial manner, the apoſtle of the Gentiles, has abundantly ſet forth, "that the Gentiles ſhould be fellow-heirs, and of the ſame body, and partakers of the promiſe in Chriſt Jeſus by the goſpel."§ Thus was broken down that partition wall, which formerly exiſted between Jews and Gentiles; all were united in one common cauſe; and all had an equal intereſt in him, with whom "there is neither Greek nor Jew; circumciſion nor uncircumciſion; barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; male nor female; but Chriſt is all, and in all; and all are one in Chriſt."‖

From what has already been expreſſed, it appears evident, that the love of God, in ſending his Son into the world, was not limited to any part of it; but that the benefits were deſigned to extend as far as the effects of Adam's tranſgreſſion. Thus the apoſtle, ſpeaking of the reſurrec-

* Iſa. xlix. 6. † John i. 4. 9. ‡ 1 John ii. 2.
§ Ephes. iii. 6. ‖ Col. iii. 11. Gal. iii. 28.

tion of the dead, argues, that "as in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive." † It affords one of the moſt encouraging conſiderations, that theſe benefits are thus unlimited; and that, through the propitiatory ſacrifice of our bleſſed Redeemer; and by that Spirit, the more plentiful effuſion of which he hath purchaſed for mankind; the advantages reſulting from his death may be received, even by thoſe, whoſe ſituation may deprive them of the opportunity of an external knowledge of the truths of the goſpel.

Unleſs we admit this, we ſhall greatly contract the benefits of Chriſt's coming. He "taſted death for every man."* His "light lighteth every man, that cometh into the world.‡" And, although the outward knowledge of theſe goſpel truths may be withheld from many, yet their operation is not therefore neceſſarily fruſtrated. How many partake of favours of which they cannot trace the cauſe! He, who is not willing that any ſhould periſh, has doubtleſs provided means by which this ſtate of perdition may be avoided, even by thoſe to whom his providence has not afforded opportunities to obtain an hiſtorical knowledge of the truths of Chriſtianity. Thoſe, however, who are in poſſeſſion of this knowledge, cannot be too thankful for it; in that they are enabled to draw nigh unto God with more full aſſurance of faith; and, confiding in their bleſſed Redeemer, are encouraged, under their various conflicts and exerciſes, to look unto him who is "touched with

† 1 Cor. xv. 22. * Heb. ii. 9. ‡ John i. 9.

the feeling of our infirmities," † and "is able to ſuccour thoſe that are tempted." ‡

The Chriſtian religion then teaches, as has been obſerved, that our firſt parents having ſinned, and loſt the divine image, the fallen nature became ſo predominant, that it was by them transferred to their offſpring: but in order that man might be reſtored to favour, and to a ſtate of purity, it pleaſed the Almighty to promiſe and ſend a Redeemer, whoſe ſacrifice of himſelf he ſaw meet to accept, as the means of reconciliation and forgiveneſs of ſins; hereby putting an end to all thoſe ſacrifices, which, from the fall, or very ſoon after, to the time when Chriſt thus offered up himſelf, had been adopted as the means of obtaining acceptance with God. And, although we cannot trace this practice to a divine command, earlier than the time of Moſes; yet the univerſal adoption of it by the religious of all ages, is a ſtrong implication that it was of divine origin, inſtituted in reference to that "one offering, by which God hath perfected for ever them that are ſanctified*."

Thus, the chief objects of the coming of Chriſt, evidently appear to have been, firſt by the ſacrifice of himſelf, to make atonement to God for us, and to become the mediator between God and man. Secondly, by the ſanctifying operation of the holy Spirit, "to finiſh tranſgreſſion, and to make an end of ſins, and to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs§." And thirdly, by putting an end to the

† Heb. iv. 15. ‡ Heb. ii. 18. * Heb. x. 14.
§ Dan. ix. 24.

legal diſpenſation, and, as the apoſtle expreſſes it, "blotting out the hand writing of ordinances that was againſt us †," to lead mankind to a more pure and ſpiritual worſhip of the divine Being.

It alſo appears, that the Chriſtian redemption is throughout a work of love. "God ſo *loved* the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life ‡." In this point of view, we contemplate this intereſting and important ſubject; and not as the effect of implacable wrath, as ſome repreſent it. Chriſt was and is the gift of God. Thus the holy ſcriptures repreſent the ſubject to us; and ſurely, the greater the gift, the greater the love. "God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us§." He co-operated with the Father in this gracious deſign; and though he was of the ſame divine nature, he condeſcended to take upon him our human nature, and "was made fleſh, and dwelt among us ‖," until he had by his life, and by his death, as man, completed the work that was given him to do; after which he aſcended to that glory, which he had with the Father before the world began.

Here we are led to conſider the divinity of our bleſſed Saviour, in which we, as a people, do moſt ſurely believe: but as every thing relating to the divine Being, that is not expreſsly revealed, is far above the reach of human comprehenſion, we are

† Col. ii. 14. ‡ John iii. 16. § Rom. v. 8. ‖ John i. 14.

deſirous of avoiding all ſuch particular diſquiſitions as lead beyond the clear expreſſion of holy writ. We can indeed ſay on this, as on every other occaſion, that we believe all that the ſcriptures have ſpoken and inculcated: we believe that the evangeliſt was clearly ſpeaking of Jeſus Chriſt, and of his divinity or godhead, when he ſaid, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The ſame was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men*." "And the Word was made fleſh and dwelt among us †." Here we have a clear and full teſtimony both to the divinity and the humanity of Chriſt; and we have, ever ſince we were a people, borne teſtimony to this ſcripture doctrine.

We likewiſe believe in the divinity of the Holy Spirit, which is frequently united in ſcripture with the Father and with the Son; and whoſe office, in the inſtruction and ſalvation of mankind, is ſet forth in divers paſſages of holy writ. See Matt. xxviii. 19. John xv. 26. Acts xxviii. 25. Heb. ix. 14.

This belief in the divinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, induced ſome of the teachers in the Chriſtian church, about three hundred years after Chriſt, to form a doctrine, to which they gave the name of Trinity; but in our writings, we ſeldom make uſe of this term, thinking it beſt on ſuch a

* John i. 1 to 4. † Ibid. 14.

ſubject to keep to ſcriptural expreſſions, and to avoid thoſe diſputes which have ſince perplexed the Chriſtian world, and led into ſpeculations beyond the power of human abilities to decide. If we conſider that we ourſelves are compoſed of a union of body, ſoul and ſpirit, and yet cannot determine how even theſe are united; how much leſs may we expect perfect clearneſs on a ſubject, ſo far above our finite comprehenſion, as that of the divine nature.

After expreſſing our ſentiments on what is called the Trinity, it may not be improper to explain our views of the doctrine of juſtification; concerning which ſo much diverſity of ſentiment prevails, ſome imputing it wholly to faith, and others principally, if not wholly, to works.

So far as remiſſion of ſins, and a capacity to receive ſalvation, are parts of juſtification, we attribute it to the ſacrifice of Chriſt; "in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of ſins, according to the riches of his grace*." But when we conſider juſtification as a ſtate of divine favour and acceptance, we aſcribe it, not ſimply either to faith or works, but to the ſanctifying operation of the Spirit of Chriſt, from which living faith and acceptable works alone proceed; and by which we may come to know, that the Spirit itſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirits, that we are the children of God †."

In attributing our juſtification, through the grace of God in Chriſt Jeſus, to the operation of

* Eph. i. 7. † Rom. viii. 16.

the Holy Spirit, which ſanctifies the heart, and produces the work of regeneration, we are ſupported by the teſtimony of the apoſtle Paul, who ſays: "Not by works of righteouſneſs which we have done, but of his mercy he ſaved us, by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt*." Again, "But ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified, in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God †."

The doctrine of the reſurrection of the dead is ſo connected with the Chriſtian religion, that it will be alſo proper to ſay ſomething on this ſubject. In explaining our belief of this doctrine, we refer to the xv. chapter of the 1ſt. Epiſtle to the Corinthians. In this chapter is clearly laid down the reſurrection of a body, though not of the ſame body that dies. "There are celeſtial bodies, and there are bodies terreſtrial; but the glory of the celeſtial is one, and the glory of the terreſtrial is another.—So alſo is the reſurrection of the dead.—It is ſown a natural body, it is raiſed a ſpiritual body: there is a natural body, and there is a ſpiritual body.—Now this I ſay, brethren, that fleſh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption‡." Here we reſt our belief in this "myſtery," without deſiring to pry into it beyond what is revealed to us; remembering, that "ſecret things belong unto the Lord our God; but thoſe things which are revealed, belong unto us and to our children§."

*Titus iii. 5. † 1 Cor. vi. 11. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 40, 42, 44, 50. § Deut. xxix. 29.

Many are the arguments and evidences which might be brought forward in favour of the Chriſtian religion; but none appears to me more forcible, than the purity of that morality which is inculcated by it; and which is moſt effectually adapted to the promotion of the happineſs of mankind in this world, as well as in that which is to come. A juſt teſt of principles, as well as of men, was laid down by our Saviour in theſe words: "By their fruits ye ſhall know them*." It is the conduct to which principles lead, by which we are to judge of their rectitude; rather than by the actions of men, who may profeſs theſe principles, but whoſe weakneſs may often cauſe a violation of them. Now to apply this teſt to Chriſt and his religion; let us firſt attend to that angelic ſong, with which his birth was introduced into the world; "Glory to God in the higheſt, and on earth peace; good will towards men†;" next, let us conſider how his precepts and his example correſponded with it. Read that moſt excellent ſermon on the mount; look at the example he has left us, under all the temptations and trials which, for our ſakes, were permitted to aſſail him. With what firmneſs did he reprove the vices and hypocriſy of the Jews! With what meekneſs did he bear their inſults and perſecutions! Truly, indeed, was it foretold of him; "He is brought as a lamb to the ſlaughter; and as a ſheep before her ſhearers is dumb, ſo he openeth not his mouth ‡." And when this people had executed upon him all

* Matt. vii. 20. † Luke ii. 14. ‡ Iſa. liii. 7.

that their malice could deviſe, he, conſiſtently with the precepts which he had inculcated, in return for all their injuries, put up this moſt affecting prayer; "Father! forgive them; they know not what they do ‡."

But this example and theſe precepts were not confined to our holy head and high prieſt. In that part of conduct which is the moſt difficult for human nature, the forgiveneſs of injuries, we find the proto-martyr, Stephen, followed his Lord's example; and, when expiring under the cruelties of the ſame people, thus poured out his ſoul unto God: "Lord! lay not this ſin to their charge*." What other religion is there, that inculcates a conduct like this! that teaches not only to forgive injuries, but even to pray for thoſe that are the cauſe of them! Precepts which alone give a decided preference to Chriſtianity, above all other religions in the world.

Let us next look into thoſe epiſtles, which the apoſtles addreſſed to the Chriſtian converts, both among the Jews and Gentiles; and there we ſhall again find, in addition to the doctrinal part of Chriſtianity, ſuch a ſpirit of pure morality and true love, ſo uniformly inculcated, and the duties of every ſtation in life taught with ſo much ſimplicity and energy, as to render the reading of them at once pleaſing and inſtructive; and ſuch as unavoidably obtain the aſſent of our judgment, however remote from them our practice may frequently be. The following extract from the

‡ Luke xxiii. 34. * Acts vii. 60.

Epiſtle to the Romans is brought forward, not becauſe it contains matter ſuperior to many other parts of the epiſtles; but becauſe of the conciſeneſs, the ſimplicity, and the energy, with which the important precepts are conveyed. "Let love be without diſſimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; not ſlothful in buſineſs; fervent in ſpirit; ſerving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing inſtant in prayer; diſtributing to the neceſſities of the ſaints; given to hoſpitality. Bleſs them which perſecute you: bleſs and curſe not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the ſame mind one towards another. Mind not high things, but condeſcend to men of low eſtate. Be not wiſe in your own conceits. Recompence to no man evil for evil. Provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men. If it be poſſible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men †."—"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good ‡."

It may not be neceſſary to enter much into thoſe arguments, which the miracles performed by Chriſt and his apoſtles, afford for the truth of the Chriſtian religion: if what is advanced in favour of the truth and credibility of the holy ſcriptures, be admitted, theſe arguments muſt unavoidably ſtrike every conſiderate and impartial mind with irreſiſtible force. It may, however, be proper to

† Rom. xii. 9 to 18. ‡ Ibid. xii. 21.

obſerve, that the credibility of theſe accounts, ſo far at leaſt as they relate to our bleſſed Saviour, receives great additional force, by being confirmed in many parts, by four different teſtimonies, whoſe diſtinct concurring evidence affords no ſmall confirmation of the truth of their relations: this confirmation is rather increaſed than leſſened, by the ſlight variations which ſometimes appear; for, by theſe variations, no ſuſpicion can reaſonably be fixed of a preconcerted deſign to impoſe upon the world. Two of the evangeliſts at leaſt were witneſſes of what they wrote; a third tells us, that he was one of thoſe who received information from ſuch, as, from the beginning, were eye-witneſſes and miniſters of the word; and the fourth is ſuppoſed to have written when in company with the apoſtle Peter, and to have received his information and inſtruction from him. To theſe relations of the evangeliſts, the following declaration and teſtimony of Peter afford additional confirmation: "We have not followed cunningly deviſed fables, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but were eye-witneſſes of his Majeſty; for he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came ſuch a voice from the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed*."

In whatever point of view, therefore, we conſider the Chriſtian religion, it exhibits to us a plan and deſign worthy of our great and gracious Creator; and ſo well adapted to the ſtate of the

* 2 Peter i. 16, 17.

human heart, that nothing appears to be wanting, but the acceptance of the terms on which it is offered. Yet the condition on which only we can be true Chriſtians, requiring us to deny ourſelves, and take up a daily croſs to our evil propenſities, this doctrine and that foundation on which it is built, are now, as formerly, to ſome a ſtumbling block, and to others, fooliſhneſs. It is indeed to be feared, that many who adopt the Chriſtian religion in theory, are but little acquainted with it in practice. True Chriſtianity is more adapted to the heart, than to the head: it is not ſo much a ſyſtem of doctrines, as it is the power of God unto ſalvation. Nevertheleſs, it neceſſarily includes doctrines; but then it requires an union of the ſpirit with the letter; of faith and of works; of the power and of the form of godlineſs. To unite theſe in our hearts, and in our actions, is what appears to me to conſtitute the true and perfect Chriſtian.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The Gift of the Spirit an Eſſential of Chriſtianity.—Different Names for the Spirit.—Neceſſity of its Aſſiſtance.—Univerſally afforded and in all Ages, but moſt plentifully in the Goſpel.—Unconditional Election and Reprobation diſowned and diſproved.

In the preceding chapter, the gift of the Holy Spirit has been conſidered as an eſſential part of true Chriſtianity; but as it is a doctrine on which we inſiſt*, more than other profeſſors of the Chriſtian

* The word "inſiſt," is here uſed, becauſe it is not a doctrine peculiar to us, but only one on which we lay more ſtreſs than moſt other Chriſtians. The church of England holds the doctrine much as we do, as may be ſeen in the liturgy, from which are extracted the two following collects, and to which others of a ſimilar tendency might be added. "The fifth Sunday after Eaſter."—"O Lord, from whom all good things do come, grant to us, thy humble ſervants, that *by thy holy inſpiration*, we may think thoſe things that be good; and *by thy merciful guiding* may perform the ſame, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *Amen*." "The 19th Sunday after Trinity."—"O God, forasmuch as without thee we are unable to pleaſe thee; mercifully grant that *thy holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule* our hearts, through, &c." See alſo Knox's Chriſtian Philoſophy.

name, I have apprehended it proper to appropriate a chapter to this ſubject; and, for that reaſon, have ſaid leſs upon it, than I ſhould otherwiſe have done, when treating of the general doctrines of Chriſtianity.

There are different names in the ſcriptures, by which this Spirit is denominated. It is not only called the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God, and of Chriſt; but it is alſo diſtinguiſhed with great propriety by the appellation of "the Grace of God*; as being a mark of his peculiar favour to mankind. Another appropriate denomination is "Light," by which are evinced its effects, in manifeſting what is good and what is evil. "For whatſoever doth make manifeſt is Light †." Other names might be enumerated by which the ſame thing is diſtinguiſhed; but theſe may be ſufficient to convey a clear idea of what I have in view.

The holy ſcriptures ſo frequently make mention of this divine influence; and enforce it with ſo much energy, that there is no doctrine derived from theſe writings, on which they appear to be more clear and explicit, and to afford leſs room for objection and controverſy.

In conſidering this ſubject, it may be proper to advance and ſupport the following poſitions.

* In ſome inſtances, the word grace in ſcripture ſimply means favour; but in others, it evidently implies an inward operative principle, and is ſynonymous with the Holy Spirit. See Cruden's and Taylor's Concordances under "Grace."

† Ephes. v. 13.

1.—The neceſſity of the aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, for underſtanding the things, and for working the works, of God.

2.—That ſuch portion of this Spirit, as is neceſſary for working out the ſoul's ſalvation, is afforded to mankind univerſally.

With regard to the firſt poſition, the apoſtle Paul argues the caſe ſo forcibly, and with ſuch logical clearneſs, that I ſhall quote his words, both as the beſt arguments and the beſt authority, that can be adduced on the occaſion. "What man (ſaith he) knoweth the things of a man, ſave the ſpirit of man which is in him? even ſo the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God*." After which he proceeds thus: "Now we have received, not the ſpirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God: which things alſo we ſpeak, not in the words which man's wiſdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth; comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned†."

In the Epiſtle to the Romans, the apoſtle alſo ſhows the neceſſity of the aſſiſtance of the Spirit, ſaying expreſsly: "If any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his—for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the ſons of God: for ye have not received the ſpirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the ſpirit of

* 1 Cor. ii. 11. † 1 Cor. ii. 12 to 14.

adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God.—Likewiſe, the Spirit alſo helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itſelf maketh interceſſion for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered †."

From theſe paſſages, and from many others which might be adduced, it appears clearly, that the influence of the Holy Spirit is neceſſary for the performance of thoſe duties, which make us truly acceptable unto God. It is by our humble attention to this Spirit, that we are inſtructed in theſe duties, and enabled to perform them; and, by abiding under its purifying influences, we are gradually created anew in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works. By this Spirit we are alſo inſtructed in the great and ſolemn duty of prayer; "Praying always with all prayer and ſupplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perſeverance*." It is likewiſe by this Spirit, that thoſe who are called to the ſacred office of goſpel miniſtry, are "made able miniſters of the New Teſtament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life ‡."

In addition to theſe clear and forcible declarations, it may be proper to remark, that they are grounded on ſuch arguments, as evince them not to be confined to the times of the apoſtles, or primitive Chriſtians; but being adapted to the

† Rom. viii. 9, 14, 15, 16, 26. * Ephes. vi. 18.
‡ 2 Cor. iii. 6.

weakneſs of man, they may reaſonably be ſuppoſed to laſt as long as that weakneſs remains: and unleſs it can be proved that, ſince thoſe times, mankind have received ſuch an extraordinary acceſſion of natural powers, as makes religion and virtue more eaſily attained than formerly, we ſhould thankfully ſubmit to be inſtructed and aſſiſted by the ſame ſupernatural means, that the holy ſcriptures ſo ſtrongly recommend, as eſſential to the performance of thoſe religious duties which we owe to our great Creator, and to our merciful Redeemer.

We come now to the ſecond poſition, viz. that ſuch a portion of the Holy Spirit, as is neceſſary for working out the ſoul's ſalvation, is afforded to mankind univerſally.

It has already been ſhown, that there are different names by which this Spirit is diſtinguiſhed. We apprehend it to be a degree of the ſame, which the apoſtle alluded to, when, writing to the Romans reſpecting the ſtate of the Gentile world, he ſays, "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law; theſe having not the law, are a law to themſelves, which ſhow the work of the law written in their hearts; their conſciences alſo bearing witneſs, and their thoughts the meanwhile accuſing, or elſe excuſing one another*."

We alſo find that the Spirit of God ſtrove with the antediluvian world, reſpecting which the Almighty gave this declaration; "My Spirit

* Rom. ii. 14 and 15.

ſhall not always ſtrive with man†." Concerning the Jews in the Moſaic diſpenſation, Nehemiah expreſſes himſelf thus in his prayer: "Thou gaveſt alſo thy good Spirit to inſtruct them ‡." And by Iſaiah it is ſaid, "They rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy §."

Thus we ſee in every age and ſtate of the world, there has been a ſecret principle at work in the minds of men, which formed the baſis of all true religion, and by inattention and diſobedience to which, they fell into thoſe enormities that produced the juſt judgments of an offended God. We believe that this divine principle is, as has already been intimated, the ſame with that which the evangeliſt John calls "the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*;" that it is the goſpel which Paul ſays, "was preached to (or in ‖) every creature which is under heaven ‡‡;" and that it is what he elſewhere ſtyles "the Grace of God, which bringeth ſalvation, and has appeared unto all men." ‖‖

But, although this divine principle has always been, in degree, afforded to mankind; yet it was by the goſpel diſpenſation, that not only life and immortality were brought to light; but that the Holy Spirit was more plentifully poured forth, and became, as it were, the leading feature of that religion, which our bleſſed Redeemer has introduc-

† Gen. vi. 3. ‡ Neh. ix. 20. § Iſa. lxiii. 10.
* John i. 9. ‖ The Greek is "ἐν πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει."
‡‡ Col. i. 23. ‖‖ Tit. ii. 11.

ed into the world. With this view of the ſubject, I apprehend, the evangeliſt expreſſes himſelf thus: "The Holy Ghoſt was not yet given, becauſe that Jeſus was not yet glorified‖." And in another place; "The law was given by Moſes; but Grace and Truth came by Jeſus Chriſt †." Of this Grace the apoſtle Paul, in particular, frequently ſpeaks in his epiſtles; but moſt fully in that to Titus, in the paſſage juſt referred to; this paſſage it may be proper here to give at large. "The Grace of God that bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in this preſent world; looking for that bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works*." This is a text to which we often refer, as deſcribing the eſſence of the Chriſtian religion; and conveying, in the cleareſt manner, our belief in the quality, the univerſality, and the effects of that gift of divine Grace, to which the apoſtle bears this ample teſtimony; and which, we here ſee, co-operates with that great object, for which the Son of God was manifeſted in the fleſh. This object, according to the teſtimony of another apoſtle, was, "To deſtroy the works

‖ John vii. 39. † John i. 17.
* Titus ii. 11 to 14.

of the devil†;" the principle of which, it ſcarcely need be ſaid, is ſin.

But to return to the preceding paſſage in Titus. There are three inferences evidently reſulting from it. 1.—That this Grace is of that quality, which produceth ſalvation. 2.—That it is univerſal: not confined to a part of mankind; but extended "to all men." 3.—That its inſtructions are ſuch as invariably lead to the practice of piety and virtue. The firſt and third of theſe inferences will, it is preſumed, be generally, if not univerſally acceded to: but the ſecond, though equally deducible from the apoſtle's words, ſome may endeavour to explain away; and to reconcile with theſe ideas of unconditional election and reprobation, which they have entertained; and on which it may be proper, in this place, to make a few remarks.

This doctrine aſſerts, that the Almighty has irrevocably decreed a certain number of human beings to everlaſting happineſs; and that the reſt are as certainly doomed to the commiſſion of ſin, and its conſequence, eternal miſery. That this is no exaggerated deſcription, will appear from the quotations given in the margin*, from the

† 1 John iii. 8.

* "I ſay, that by the ordination and will of God, Adam fell, God would have man to fall. We refer the cauſes of hardening us to God." *Calvin.* "God hath predeſtinated not only unto damnation, but alſo unto the cauſes of it, whomſoever he ſaw meet." *Beza.* "It is the opinion of our doctors, that God did inevitably decree

writings of the advocates of this doctrine; and I ſhould think, that to deſcribe it, was enough to refute it, had we not in many other inſtances, as well as in this, occaſion to obſerve, in how different a point of view different men ſee the ſame ſubject. That the holy ſcriptures, thoſe faithful records both of the juſtice and mercy of God, ſhould be preſſed to the ſupport of ſuch a ſentiment, is matter of ſurprize. I am aware that ſome parts of the ſcriptures, taken without their context, may be ſuppoſed to incline to this ſentiment †. This is particularly the caſe in the epiſtle to the Ro-

the temptation and fall of man." *Paræus.* "God moveth the robber to kill. He killeth, God forcing him thereunto." *Zuinglius.* "Reprobate perſons (ſaith *Piscator*) are abſolutely ordained to this two-fold end: to undergo everlaſting puniſhment, and neceſſarily to ſin; and therefore to ſin, that they may be juſtly puniſhed."

† It is worthy of remark, that ſeveral paſſages in our Engliſh tranſlation, which ſeem to favour this doctrine, are capable of a different rendering. For inſtance, in Acts c. ii. 23. where it is tranſlated, "Him being delivered by the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God," &c. the Greek word, ἐκδοτον rendered, *delivered*, may with equal, or more propriety be tranſlated, *given forth*; then the paſſage may be read thus: "Him, who was given forth by the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and with wicked hands have crucified and ſlain." Another Greek word is uſed in every paſſage that is rendered, *delivered*. Acts iv. 27. and 1 Peter ii. 8. are alſo capable of being differently tranſlated.

mans, in which the apoſtle is ſetting forth the call of the Gentiles, and the temporary rejection of the Jews; juſtifying, with great energy, the power and the wiſdom, the goodneſs and the ſeverity, of God in this reſpect: but that he meant thereby to inculcate, that the Almighty, perſonally and unconditionally, elected individuals to a ſtate of future happineſs, and decreed others to a ſtate of miſery, is what I think no fair conſtruction of the epiſtle will warrant. On the contrary, after ſhowing and enforcing the right of the Almighty, to make uſe of individuals, or of nations, for carrying on his great and unſearchable deſigns; the apoſtle ſets forth, even with reſpect to the Gentiles, the call of whom it was peculiarly his object to juſtify, that their continuance in divine favour depended upon the ſteadfaſtneſs of their faith and faithfulneſs to him, who had "called them out of darkneſs into his marvellous light*;" and "made them partakers of his promiſe in Chriſt Jeſus †."

The following quotation from that part of the epiſtle, in which the apoſtle may be ſaid to ſum up his arguments, will tend to ſet the ſubject in a clear light: "For I ſpeak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am the apoſtle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.—If ſome of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them; and with them partakeſt of the root and fatneſs of the olive tree; boaſt not againſt the branches; but if thou boaſt [remember] thou

* 1 Pet. ii. 9. † Ephes. iii. 6.

bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, the branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith; be not high minded, but fear; for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God, on them which fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise, thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able to graff them in again."*

Here we see no unconditional election or reprobation; but a doctrine which perfectly comports with the declaration of the Almighty about six hundred years before, when, after sending the prophet Jeremiah to the potter's house, to instruct him at once in the divine power and mercy, he sent a message by him to the house of Israel, in this memorable language: "O House of Israel! Cannot I do with you as this potter, saith the Lord? Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O House of Israel †!" After thus setting forth his power, the Almighty proceeds to show in what manner he is pleased to exercise it. "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against which I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to

* Rom. xi. 13, 23. † Jer. xviii. 6.

do unto them. And at what inſtant I ſhall ſpeak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my ſight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I ſaid I would benefit them*."

Thus we ſee the principle of the dealings of God with mankind, in different ages of the world. The Ninevites are a proof of the truth of the firſt part of the foregoing declaration; and the Iſraelites of the latter: for, however, the Almighty may, in ſome inſtances, ſee meet to diſtinguiſh a people, or individuals, by ſome peculiar privileges; yet if they neglect, and trample upon his law; and are unmindful of the favours which they receive; he does not fail to puniſh them accordingly. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will puniſh you for all your iniquities†," was the declaration concerning this highly favoured people; from which, and various other paſſages in holy writ we may ſafely conclude that man's deſtruction is of himſelf; agreeably to another declaration of the Almighty by one of his prophets: "O Iſrael! thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf; but in me is thine help‡." "The grace of God which bringeth ſalvation, and hath appeared unto all men," affordeth this help. It is ſaving grace; and it is univerſal grace. It is a gift conſiſtent with every attribute of the Deity; and with the declarations concerning Him, recorded in the ſcriptures of truth. That

* Jer. xviii. 7, 10. † Amos iii. 2. ‡ Hoſea xiii. 9.

the Almighty may ſee meet, in his unſearchable wiſdom, to confer a greater degree of this grace on ſome than on others; and that he may peculiarly call ſome to particular ſervices in his church, or in the world, are no doubt conſiſtent with the divine attributes: but with reſpect to the future happineſs of mankind, there is abundant reaſon to believe, that all receive a ſufficient degree of grace to procure it; and if this grace is not equally diſtributed to all; yet ſurely, we may conclude that, at laſt, the judgment will be according to this moſt excellent rule; "Where much is given, much will be required;" and conſequently, where little is given, but little will be required.

In addition to what has already been ſaid, it may be proper to obſerve, that in conſidering this ſubject, we ſhould always diſtinguiſh betwixt thoſe paſſages in the ſcriptures, which ſimply declare the power of the Almighty, and thoſe which ſet forth the manner in which he exerciſes that power. Thus the apoſtle has ſaid, and no doubt ſaid truly, "He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth*." But then are we not alſo told that, "the Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works†;" and has not the very ſame apoſtle, after recommending that "prayers and interceſſions "ſhould be made for all men‡," expreſsly declared, that "this is good and acceptable in the ſight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be ſaved, and to come unto the knowledge of the

* Rom. ix. 18. † Pſa. cxlv. 9. ‡ 1 Tim. ii. 1.

truth§?" Correſpondent with this is the language of the apoſtle Peter: "The Lord is not ſlack concerning his promiſe, (as ſome men count ſlackneſs,) but is long-ſuffering to us-ward; not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance‖."

It ſhould alſo be conſidered, that hardneſs of heart is the puniſhment, and not the original cauſe, of ſin; nor does the hardneſs ſpoken of by the apoſtle in the epiſtle to the Romans, neceſſarily imply perpetual hardneſs; for of the Jews whom he repreſents in a ſtate of hardneſs, he ſays, "If they abide not ſtill in unbelief, they ſhall be graffed in again †."

If God had judicially hardened, or ſuffered to be hardened, thoſe who had been long wilfully diſobedient to his laws, he might, with great propriety, "ſhow his wrath, and make his power known in the veſſels of wrath, fitted for deſtruction‡" by their own accumulated tranſgreſſions. Thus were Pharaoh and the Jews monuments of the juſtice of an offended God, and warnings to ſucceeding generations, not to deſpiſe thoſe long-ſuffering mercies, with which he waits the return of thoſe who ſin againſt him.

Seeing then that the deſigns of our great and gracious Creator are ſo replete with "good-will to men;" that as far as is conſiſtent with that free-agency, with which he has ſeen meet to endow us, he is ever willing our happineſs, and furniſhing

§ 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4.

‖ 2 Pet. iii. 9. † Rom. xi. 23. ‡ Rom. ix. 22.

us with the means of procuring it; "Let us draw nigh with a true heart, in full assurance of faith;"* and trusting in that merciful redemption, by which we have, on repentance, the forgiveness of sins; "Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need†." Thus will that sanctification of heart, and holiness of life, be experienced, without which we are told "No man shall see the Lord‡;" and all will redound to the glory of God, who has shown the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus."§

* Heb. x. 22. † Heb. iv. 16. ‡ Heb. xii. 14.
§ Ephes. ii. 7.

CHAPTER V.

ON DIVINE WORSHIP AND GOSPEL MINISTRY.

Worſhip an act of the Soul towards God.—Meetings for Worſhip may be held in ſilence.—Public Worſhip an indiſpenſable Duty, reaſonable and beneficial.—Silent Worſhip adapted to all States.—Its Advantages.—Scripture Arguments for it.—Prayer a neceſſary Duty.—The qualifications of Miniſters.—Human Learning not eſſential to the Miniſtry.—No Individual has an excluſive right to aſſume the Exerciſe of it.—Women's Preaching.—Preaching for Hire.—Tithes.

HAVING, in the preceding chapters, treated on thoſe ſubjects in which we nearly agree with the generality of Chriſtian profeſſors, I come now to conſider thoſe points, in which we materially differ from them. Two of theſe, being nearly connected, are included in one chapter, though it will alſo be neceſſary to conſider them ſeparately. Theſe are, Divine Worſhip and Goſpel Miniſtry.

With reſpect to the firſt, we conſider that worſhip is an act of the ſoul towards God; that he is a Spirit; that the ſoul of man is ſpiritual; and therefore that, in the performance of the ſolemn duty of worſhip, words are not eſſentially neceſſary; becauſe He, who is a Spirit, underſtands the language of the Spirit. Nevertheleſs, we do not diſapprove the uſe of words in our religious meetings; whether in prayer, praiſes, or in the exer-

eiſe of goſpel miniſtry, when they are delivered under the influence of the Holy Spirit, which alone can, as we apprehend, rightly qualify for the performance of theſe important ſervices. Hence, when we come to our places of religious worſhip, we think it right to ſit down in ſilence, and wait therein upon God, for the aſſiſtance of that Spirit which helpeth our infirmities, and without which we know not what to pray for as we ought. Here we may be favoured, at times, to feel the Spirit itſelf making interceſſion for us; under the influence of which, we believe, a ſecret ſigh or groan will aſcend with more acceptance before the Father of ſpirits, than any form of words which may be prepared for us; or that do not ariſe from a heart thus qualified for verbal expreſſion.

Holding our meetings under theſe impreſſions, it very frequently happens, that they are continued throughout in ſilence; a ſtate which, when attended with a right exerciſe of mind, we conſider as beſt adapted to the performance of the ſolemn duty of divine worſhip: for here, every individual, who feels his own condition and neceſſities, can ſecretly pour out his ſoul unto God, without diſtraction or interruption; and here alſo we can freely partake of thoſe divine influences upon the ſoul, which, when mercifully afforded, conſtitute the higheſt enjoyment of man upon earth.

But we are ſenſible that theſe effects are not always experienced in our religious meetings. We fear that many who attend them, have not their minds rightly exerciſed; we know that divine good is not at our command; and we believe that the

ſenſible enjoyment of it is often withheld for a ſeaſon, and ſometimes for a long ſeaſon, from the truly exerciſed mind. "Verily, thou art a God that hideſt thyſelf, O God of Iſrael, the Saviour." But, even in this ſituation, we think it much ſafer to wait in a ſtate of paſſive ſilence, than, by the activity of the creature, to ruſh unprepared into thoſe external acts of devotion, which we believe are no further acceptable, than as they come from a heart rightly prepared to offer them. A ſtate of humble, ſilent waiting and dependence on divine help, is ſo adapted to the relation in which man ſtands to his great Creator, that we believe it peculiarly likely to meet with divine acceptance and regard. "Bleſſed are thoſe ſervants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find watching."* But to thoſe who do not patiently abide in this ſtate of mind, a very different conſequence is ſhown to reſult. "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compaſs yourſelves about with ſparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the ſparks that ye have kindled. This ſhall ye have of mine hand; ye ſhall lie down in ſorrow."† And we ought by no means to forget the conſequence under the law, of offering ſtrange fire to the Lord.‡

We conſider it an indiſpenſable duty, publicly to meet together for the worſhip of God; and "not to forſake the aſſembling of ourſelves together, as the manner of ſome is."§ It is not only a reaſonable, but a beneficial duty; reaſonable,

* Luke xii. 37. † Iſaiah l. 11.
‡ Lev. x. 1 to 5. § Heb. x. 25.

becauſe it is a public acknowledgment of our dependence on the Supreme Being; and beneficial, becauſe we may, if rightly exerciſed in our minds, be favoured to draw nigh unto God, by the Spirit of his Son; and thus experience that communion, which is with the Father, and with his Son Chriſt Jeſus; and which the true Chriſtian travellers alſo have one with another in him.

In a ſilent travail of ſpirit for this deſirable experience, the ſpiritual ſtrength of thoſe who are thus exerciſed, is increaſed; they become helpful one to another, in promoting the circulation of that life in which their fellowſhip conſiſts; and are, at times, ſo united in feeling one for and with another, as to attain to an experience ſimilar to that which the apoſtle deſcribes: "Whether one member ſuffer, all the members ſuffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."*

It may be ſuppoſed by ſome, that although this mode of worſhip may be adapted to adults in religious experience, it is too refined an attainment for thoſe who are in a ſtate of infancy in religion; or who are much ſtrangers to it. We, however, conſider it as eminently adapted to every human being, who is deſirous of being acceptable in the ſight of his Creator. Where is the well diſpoſed mind, that has not occaſion for an attention to that univerſal command, "What I ſay unto you, I ſay unto all, Watch?"† This ſecret attention and exerciſe of mind is therefore neceſſary for all; and as man is willing to be reduced into it, the weak and

* 1 Cor. xii. 26. † Mark xiii. 37.

erring mind may be brought to the diſcovery of its own ſtate; and feeling the neceſſity of divine aid, to overcome its evil propenſities, and to ſecure eternal happineſs, may thus feel alſo the neceſſity, and the qualification, to pray for forgiveneſs of paſt ſins, and for ability ſo to live under the influences of divine fear and love, as to experience preſervation from thoſe evils which abound in the world, or to which the mind may be naturally prone.

Many, therefore, we conceive, are the advantages which reſult from ſilent worſhip. It enables a number of Chriſtians to meet together for the performance of this important duty, without depending on any man to aſſiſt them therein; a dependence, which deprives numbers of publicly diſcharging this duty even once in the week. It alſo preſerves from the dangerous ſituation of drawing nigh unto God with the mouth, and honouring Him with the lips, whilſt the heart is far from Him; and it is peculiarly adapted to the performance of that worſhip in ſpirit and in truth, concerning which our bleſſed Redeemer has given this memorable teſtimony: "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worſhippers ſhall worſhip the Father, in ſpirit and in truth; for the Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him. God is a Spirit; and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth."*

In addition to the foregoing reaſons, many paſſages may be adduced from the ſcriptures, pointing out the advantage of ſilent waiting upon God.

* John iv. 23. & 24.

In reading thoſe devotional effuſions, which have been tranſmitted to us in the book of Pſalms, we find this waiting ſtrongly and frequently inculcated. The evangelical prophet likewiſe ſpeaks frequently of the benefit of ſuch a ſtate of waiting, in which ſilence is either expreſſed, or neceſſarily implied. The latter part of the fortieth chapter, and the beginning of the forty-firſt, are ſo appoſite to the preſent ſubject; and, at the ſame time, ſo replete with religious inſtruction and conſolation; that it may be uſeful to give them at large. "Why ſayeſt thou, O Jacob, and ſpeakeſt, O Iſrael, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is paſſed over from my God? Haſt thou not known? haſt thou not heard, that the everlaſting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no ſearching of his underſtanding. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might, he increaſeth ſtrength. Even the youths ſhall faint and be weary, and the young men utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord ſhall renew their ſtrength; they ſhall mount up with wings as eagles; they ſhall run, and not be weary; they ſhall walk and not faint. Keep ſilence before me, O iſlands; and let the people renew their ſtrength; let them come near, then let them ſpeak; let us come near together to judgment."*

But whilſt we are laying aſide the outward forms, we are far, very far indeed, from deſiring to diſcourage the practice of true prayer. It is a

* Iſa. xl. 27 to 31. and xli. 1.

duty which we owe to our great Creator; and which the feeling of our own manifold wants and dangers, will often draw from the rightly concerned mind. It is indeed difficult to conceive, how any thing deſerving the name of religion, can be preſerved without it. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation,"* is an injunction delivered by our Holy Head and High Prieſt, who in this, as in many other inſtances, has ſhown, that he was, as the author of the epiſtle to the Hebrews expreſſes it, "Touched with the feeling of our infirmities;"† for he immediately adds, "the Spirit indeed is willing; but the fleſh is weak." In this command, our bleſſed Lord ſets forth both the neceſſity and the preparation for this great duty, which conſtitutes a very important part of religious worſhip. We are not to ruſh haſtily or unpreparedly either into private or public prayer; but having our minds engaged in true watchfulneſs, or waiting, for the influence of the Holy Spirit upon the ſoul, we thereby become qualified to put up our petitions to the Father of ſpirits in ſuch a manner, as the impreſſions which he affords us of our wants ſhall indicate. And when we are brought into a humbling conſideration of the many mercies and favours, of which we are unworthy partakers, as the ſubjects of creation, of redemption, and of that bountiful proviſion which is made for us, we ſhall find abundant cauſe frequently to offer that praiſe, by which the Almighty is glorified: and of

* Mat. xxvi. 41. † Heb. iv. 15.

which he is, with the Son of his love, through the eternal Spirit, for ever worthy.

The right qualification of thoſe who occupy the ſtation of miniſters, is of great importance to every religious ſociety. It will, I preſume, be univerſally agreed to be in the firſt place neceſſary, that the principles and practice of theſe ſhould correſpond with their profeſſion and ſtation; and next, that they be called and qualified according to the nature and principles of that religion, which they ſtand forth to eſpouſe. To apply theſe ſelf-evident rules to the Chriſtian religion, under its various diviſions, it muſt be deemed neceſſary for a goſpel miniſter, that he poſſeſs a heartfelt conviction of the truths of Chriſtianity, as well as of the principles of that particular ſociety, of which he is a member; alſo that his moral conduct be ſuch as the goſpel of Chriſt requires. When there is any deficiency either in principle or practice, there is reaſon to fear that ſuch will do more injury than benefit to the cauſe of religion; as well as render themſelves objects of diſguſt and contempt. "Unto the wicked God ſaith, What haſt thou to do to declare my ſtatutes; or that thou ſhouldſt take my covenant in thy mouth; ſeeing thou hateſt inſtruction, and caſteſt my words behind thee."*

As to the further qualification for a goſpel miniſter, although the definition already given may be generally agreed to, yet, in the application of it, ſome diverſity of ſentiment does exiſt. As the nature and principles of the Chriſtian religion

* Pſal. l. 16 and 17.

are the ſame now as formerly, we conceive that the ſame divine call and influence, which qualified the early miniſters and promulgators of the goſpel, ſhould be (in a degree at leaſt) experienced by its miniſters to the end of the world: eſpecially as we have no other qualification pointed out in the holy ſcriptures. This call was "not of men, neither by man; but by Jeſus Chriſt, and God the Father."* We believe that the ſame is inwardly and immediately received by the true goſpel miniſters of the preſent day; and that, in the diſcharge of the duties of this ſacred office, the renewed influences of divine wiſdom and ſtrength ſhould be waited for, and experienced. Thus miniſters are qualified to ſpeak to the ſtate of their hearers; and to baptize them into the name (or power) of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; thereby fulfilling that true commiſſion for goſpel miniſtry given by our Saviour, Mat. xxviii. 19.

The foregoing qualifications correſpond with the deſcription, which the apoſtle Peter gives of prophecy, and which we conceive to be deſcriptive of the eſſentials of a goſpel miniſter. "Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt."† Thus we ſee that both antient prophecy and goſpel miniſtry came "not of men, nor by man;" that they required thoſe who exerciſed them to be holy men of God; ſuch as could ſay to others, "Walk, as ye have us for an

* Gal. i. 1. † 2 Pet. i. 21.

example;" and that in performing the duties of theſe offices, they ſhould ſpeak "as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt;" or in other words, as the "Spirit gave them utterance†." If miniſters are not thus influenced and directed, we may expect the declaration reſpecting the prophets formerly, who ran and were not ſent, to be verified: "They ſhall not profit the people at all." Nor ſhould this ſerious language be forgotten: "Woe to the fooliſh prophets, that follow their own ſpirit, and have ſeen nothing."

What is ſaid reſpecting an inward call to the miniſtry, is by no means peculiar to our religious ſociety. However the doctrine of the influence of the ſpirit may be ſlighted by ſome, it is in this inſtance, as well as in its general influence and operation, clearly maintained by the church of England, as appears by the following queſtion put to thoſe who apply to be admitted to the office of deacon: "Do you truſt that you are *inwardly moved by the Holy Ghoſt*, to take upon you this office and miniſtration, &c." The anſwer required is, "I truſt ſo." This doctrine is alſo conſiſtent with the general obſervation on the prieſthood, made by the author of the epiſtle to the Hebrews: "No man taketh this honour unto himſelf, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron."* The writings of the apoſtles abundantly ſhow, not only whence they derived their commiſſion, but alſo the influence under which they exerciſed it. Thus the apoſtle Paul ſays: "Which things alſo we

† Acts ii. 4. * Heb. v. 4.

ſpeak, not in the words which man's wiſdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth."

From all theſe conſiderations, we believe that it is neceſſary, in the firſt call to the miniſtry, to be "inwardly moved by the Holy Ghoſt;" and that, in the various performances of this ſacred office, the renewings of this divine influence and ability ſhould be waited for, and experienced, as the moſt likely means to fulfil the apoſtolic exhortation: "If any man ſpeak, let him ſpeak as the oracles of God; if any man miniſter, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jeſus Chriſt; to whom be praiſe and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."*

From our views of this important ſubject, there ariſe a few points, in which we materially differ from moſt other profeſſors of Chriſtianity.

1.—In not conſidering human learning eſſential to a goſpel miniſter.

2.—In believing that no individual has a right to aſſume the excluſive exerciſe of this miniſtry, in a congregation of Chriſtians; but that all, both male and female, who are rightly moved thereto, may exerciſe this gift.

3.—That this miniſtry being, if rightly received, received freely, and without any pecuniary expenſe to qualify for it, it therefore ought to be freely communicated; and no further ſupport expected by miniſters, than what is authoriſed by Chriſt, and practiſed by his apoſtles.

* 1 Peter iv. 11.

Upon each of theſe points, it ſeems proper to make a few remarks.

On the firſt, very little appears neceſſary; for if we conſider the holy ſcriptures, and particularly the New Teſtament, as any guide to us in this matter, we ſhall not only find, that human literature is no where recommended for this office; but likewiſe, that many of the apoſtles were illiterate men. It is alſo clear that the apoſtle Paul, though a man of learning, diſclaimed the influence of it upon his miniſtry, as appears from various parts of his epiſtles, particularly from the firſt and ſecond chapters of the epiſtle to the Corinthians, of which the firſt five verſes of the ſecond chapter appear eſpecially worthy of notice. "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of ſpeech or of wiſdom, declaring unto you the teſtimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, ſave Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakneſs, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my ſpeech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wiſdom, but in demonſtration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of men, but in the power of God."*

But although we do not conſider human learning as eſſential to a goſpel miniſter; yet we are ſo far from diſeſteeming or ſlighting its uſe, that we wiſh due attention to be paid to it by the members of our ſociety: for we believe that thoſe who have

* 1 Cor. ii. 1 to 5.

it, and are diſpoſed to make a right uſe of it, may apply it to the promotion of religion and virtue, as well as to the benefit of civil ſociety.

With reſpect to the ſecond point, we have the practice of the primitive church ſo decidedly in our favour, that I am at a loſs to conceive how a practice ſo repugnant to it, can have ſo generally prevailed as it has done, in almoſt all the Chriſtian churches. The practice alluded to is, that of an individual aſſuming the excluſive exerciſe of the miniſtry; which is directly contrary to what the apoſtle recommends, as well as declares to be the practice of the church in early times. This appears clear from the fourteenth chapter of the firſt epiſtle to the Corinthians, where firſt addreſſing the believers in general, the Apoſtle thus expreſſes himſelf: "Follow after charity, and deſire ſpiritual gifts; but rather that ye may propheſy."* By this propheſying, he does not appear ſo much to mean the foretelling of future events, as the general purpoſes of goſpel miniſtry; for in the third verſe he ſays, "He that propheſieth, ſpeaketh unto men to exhortation, to edification and comfort."† After this general advice and explanation, he proceeds to ſhow the ſuperiority of propheſying to ſpeaking with tongues; and then of thoſe who have received this divine gift, he ſaith, "Let the prophets ſpeak two or three, and let the others judge. If any thing be revealed to another that ſitteth by, let the firſt hold his peace; for ye

* 1 Cor. xiv. 1. † Ibid. ver. 3.

may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted."‡

After this unequivocal description of the rule and practice of the primitive church, further argument seems unnecessary. I shall therefore proceed to the consideration of another part of this head, from which it appears that we admit women, as well as men, to a participation and exercise of the gift of gospel ministry. We are aware of the objection which is made from the prohibition laid upon women speaking and teaching in the church, and usurping authority over the man.* But if, on every occasion, where there is an apparent difference betwixt one part of scripture and another, it be admitted that scripture is the best interpreter of scripture, I believe very little difficulty will arise in removing this objection. It should be considered, that the words used by the apostle on this occasion, cannot mean the exercise of gospel ministry; because, in the very epistle in which he first mentions this prohibition, he gives particular directions respecting the manner in which women are to exercise that gift, which he denominates "praying or prophesying;"† and which he no doubt considered as different from speaking, teaching, or usurping authority: for it cannot with any colour of reason be supposed, that the apostle would give directions for the exercise of that, which he thought never should be exercised.§

‡ Cor. ver. 29 to 31. * 1 Tim. ii. 11. 12. † 1 Cor. xi. 4.

§ See John Locke's note on Cor. xi. 3. where he supports the construction here given.

In addition to the preceding argument, ſeveral other paſſages in the New Teſtament may be advanced, which clearly ſhow that women, as well as men, were engaged in the work of the miniſtry in the primitive church. Luke, in ſpeaking of Philip the deacon, ſaith, "the ſame man had four daughters, which did propheſy."† In the epiſtle to the Romans, the apoſtle ſays, "I recommend unto you Phebe our ſiſter, who is a ſervant[a] of the church that is at Cenchrea."‡ Greet Priſcilla[b] and Aquila, my helpers in Chriſt Jeſus."*—"Salute Tryphæna and Tryphoſa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Perſis,[c] which laboured much[d] in the Lord."§ And in another epiſtle he ſays, "Help thoſe women that laboured with us in the goſpel."‖ Theſe are paſſages which clearly

† Acts xxi. 9.

a The Greek word here rendered ſervant is the ſame as in other places is rendered deacon or miniſter. It is rendered miniſter here in almoſt all other tranſlations.

‡ Rom. xvi. 1.

b Priſcilla is here, and in two other paſſages, placed before her huſband; from which, and other circumſtances, we may conclude ſhe was a miniſter of no ſmall eminence in the church.

c The adjective for "beloved," being in Greek in the feminine gender, ſhows that Perſis was a woman.

d The Greek words here rendered "labour and laboured," are the ſame as the apoſtle uſes when he ſpeaks of himſelf labouring in the goſpel.

* Rom. xvi. 3. § Ibid 12, 13. ‖ Phil. iv. 3.

evince the admiſſion of the female ſex, in early times, to the work and ſervice of the goſpel: but what adds not a little to our argument is, that this was expreſsly foretold in ſuch a manner, as would, if we had no precedent, fully warrant the practice: for on this ſubject we may uſe the words of the apoſtle Peter, and ſay, "This is that which was ſpoken by the prophet Joel:—And it ſhall come to paſs in the laſt days, ſaith God, I will pour out of my ſpirit upon all fleſh, and your ſons and your *daughters* ſhall propheſy; and your young men ſhall ſee viſions, and your old men ſhall dream dreams: and on my ſervants, and on my *handmaidens*, I will pour out in thoſe days of my Spirit, and they ſhall propheſy."*

We come now to the third point, viz. the maintenance which is allowed to the miniſters of the goſpel. On this ſubject the directions of our bleſſed Lord, are ſo particular, that, with the practice of his apoſtles, they ſet the matter in a very clear point of view. The directions, ſo far as they relate to this ſubject, I ſhall tranſcribe from the tenth chapter of Matthew, when Chriſt ſent forth the twelve apoſtles on their firſt miſſion: "Heal the ſick, cleanſe the lepers, raiſe the dead, caſt out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor ſilver, nor braſs in your purſes:—for the workman is worthy of his meat. And into whatſoever city or town ye ſhall enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and therein abide till ye go thence.—And whoſoever ſhall not receive you, nor

* Acts ii. 16 to 18.

hear your words, when ye depart out of that houſe or city, ſhake off the duſt of your feet."†

In the foregoing paſſage, we have directions for the conduct of the miniſters of Chriſt, both when their miniſtry is received, and when it is rejected. In the former caſe, all that is provided is temporary accommodation, whilſt travelling in the work of the miniſtry; or ſo engaged therein, as to prevent their attention to their temporal occupations. In the latter caſe, they are by no means authorized to extort a forced maintenance; but, as a teſtimony againſt thoſe who reject them, they are directed to ſhake off the duſt that cleaved to their feet. Well would it have been for the Chriſtian religion, had its miniſters, under all denominations, adhered to their Lord's inſtructions on this ſubject; and acted with that noble diſintereſtedneſs which he inculcates, and which we find practiſed by his immediate followers, ſo as to enable one of them to ſay, "I ſeek not yours, but you."* And here I cannot well avoid expreſſing great regret for the wound which there is reaſon to believe Chriſtianity has received, and ſtill receives, from a lucrative eſtabliſhment for miniſters; a circumſtance which holds out a temptation for unqualified, and even immoral men, to ſeek for, and get into that office, with no better motive (I believe it will be generally allowed) than that which it was foretold would actuate the corrupted ſons of Eli; "Put me, I pray thee, into one of the prieſt's offices, that I may eat a piece of bread."‡

† Mat. x. 8 to 14. * 2 Cor. xii. 14.
‡ 1 Sam. ii. 36.

We are aware of the arguments advanced from ſome expreſſions of the apoſtle Paul, in favour of an eſtabliſhed ſupport for miniſters; and which I apprehend are all compriſed in the following words of this apoſtle: "Do ye not know, that they which miniſter about holy things, live of the things of the temple; and they which wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar? Even ſo hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the goſpel, ſhould live of the goſpel."† Now all this only proves a ſupport conſiſtent with what "the Lord hath ordained," and which is already given in his own words. This we readily admit, and adopt in our practice; but ſurely no one can infer, from the foregoing paſſages, that miniſters are to be provided with a ſettled maintenance; and not to labour with their hands, or be engaged in the uſual occupations of life for their own ſupport, and that of their families.

That we are juſtified in the conſtruction given of our Lord's direction, and the apoſtle's reference to it, is abundantly clear from the practice which reſulted from it; and which cannot more completely or energetically be deſcribed, than in the words of the ſame apoſtle, contained in his moſt excellent addreſs to the elders of Epheſus, which he concludes in this memorable language: "I have coveted no man's ſilver, or gold, or apparel; yea, you yourſelves know that theſe hands have miniſtered unto my neceſſities, and to them that were with me. I have ſhowed you all things, how

† 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14.

that ſo labouring, ye ought to ſupport the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jeſus, how he ſaid, It is more bleſſed to give than to receive."*

Theſe being our ſentiments on this important ſubject, we make no proviſion for the ſupport of our miniſters, further than the diſcharge of thoſe expenſes which travelling in their religious ſervices neceſſarily occaſions: and if we make no proviſion for the ſupport of our own miniſters, whoſe miniſtry we approve, we think ourſelves fully warranted in declining to contribute to the ſupport of others, and of a worſhip connected with them, from both of which we conſcientiouſly diſſent. A miniſtry with a ſettled maintenance, forced even from thoſe, who ſo far diſapprove of their eſtabliſhment, as to withdraw from their teaching, is ſo evidently incompatible with the doctrine and practice of Chriſt and his apoſtles, that I think it unneceſſary to ſay more to juſtify our principles in this reſpect. But, although it appears to me to be a ſyſtem ſo deeply injurious to the intereſts of true religion, I have no doubt that many, not ſeeing the ſubject in the ſame point of view, have ſeriouſly entered under theſe circumſtances into this vocation; and are piouſly concerned to diſcharge the duties of their ſtation: theſe ſhould be left to their own maſter, to whom we muſt all, at laſt, either ſtand or fall.

After what has been ſaid reſpecting the general maintenance of goſpel miniſters, it appears ſuperfluous to enter into argument againſt that moſt

* Acts xx. 33 to 35.

objectionable and antichriſtian mode of ſupport by tithes. Their divine right is generally exploded and abandoned: their impolicy is almoſt univerſally acknowledged. How far the teſtimony which we have borne againſt them may have contributed to produce theſe effects, is not for me to determine; but it is hoped that ſo long as this yoke remains, that teſtimony will continue to be maintained, with the firmneſs and meekneſs which ſhould ever be united in the ſupport of religious truths.

CHAPTER VI.

ON BAPTISM AND THE SUPPER.

Preliminary Obſervations.—Two kinds of Baptiſm.—Water and the Spirit.—Remarks on Matt. xxviii. 19.—This and other arguments in favour of Water Baptiſm, anſwered.—Sprinkling not Baptiſm.—Sprinkling of Infants not authoriſed by the Scriptures.—Circumſtances attending it highly objectionable.—The Lord's Supper.—The circumſtances attending it fully admitted.—Not perpetual any more than Waſhing of Feet.—The true Lord's Supper.—Our ſentiments on theſe ſubjects not from a diſeſteem of Chriſtianity, but the reverſe.

BEFORE entering into a ſeparate conſideration of theſe ſubjects, I ſhall premiſe a few words on the nature of religious obſervances and ceremonies. Theſe appear to me to be generally local

or temporary; and, if we may judge from what we read in the New Teſtament, we may ſafely conclude, that the uſe of them is variable. There is not a practice more ſtrictly enjoined by our bleſſed Lord, and that both by precept and example, than the waſhing of each other's feet, as related by the evangeliſt John, chap. the thirteenth. But who, conſidering the different local circumſtances, believes this to be a duty now incumbent upon us? The apoſtles who met at Jeruſalem, to conſider the attempt of ſome Jewiſh Chriſtians, to impoſe the rite of circumciſion on thoſe gentiles who embraced Chriſtianity, came to a ſolemn, and no doubt, right concluſion on ſuch things,* as it was then deemed neceſſary to obſerve; and yet of theſe, except one of a moral nature, there are none now conſidered obligatory. Nay, we even find the apoſtle Paul, a few years after, enforcing a liberty with reſpect to meats offered to idols, which this decree certainly does not warrant; a decree which there is great reaſon to believe he had himſelf united in forming.

The Chriſtian church was at that time juſt emerging from the ceremonies of Judaiſm, and the ſuperſtitions of Heatheniſm. In this ſtate of things, "it ſeemed good to the Holy Ghoſt," gradually to remove thoſe legal obſervations and ceremonies connected with the Moſaic diſpenſation; and not to enjoin an immediate diſregard to the whole of them at once. It was the morning of the goſpel day; and if the brightneſs of

* Acts xv.

that morning has been (what I apprehend all proteſtants agree with us in believing) greatly obſcured; and the ſun prevented from ſhining forth with meridian ſplendour, by the darkneſs of many unneceſſary obſervances and traditions, which were afterwards introduced into the Chriſtian church; we muſt indeed regret the circumſtance; but when further light is renewed and afforded, we ought to avail ourſelves of its advantages, and endeavour to ſtand open to thoſe further diſcoveries, which are conſiſtent with the nature and ſpirit of the goſpel; and which may be ſupported as ſuch by the doctrines contained in the holy Scriptures, particularly in the New Teſtament.

After making theſe general remarks, we may proceed to the conſideration of the ſubject of Baptiſm. Of this we read in the New Teſtament of two kinds, namely, Baptiſm with Water, and Baptiſm with the Spirit. The former was, in ſome degree, in uſe under the Jewiſh law; and ſome writers mention that it was occaſionally both added to, and ſubſtituted for circumciſion, in the admiſſion of proſelytes. When the forerunner of our Lord appeared to fulfil his miſſion, he made particular uſe of this ceremony; and from him it was called the baptiſm of John. From this practice among the Jews, and by John the baptiſt, Water Baptiſm appears to have been introduced into the Chriſtian church, as the mode of acknowledging its converts; but we conceive it was no more an eſſential part of Chriſtianity,

than other Jewiſh ceremonies, for a time practiſed by the early Chriſtians.

It is clear that John conſidered his diſpenſation and baptiſm as only temporary; nor does he, as a ſubſtitute for his baptiſm, refer his diſciples to any other baptiſm with water, to be inſtituted by Chriſt. On the contrary, he plainly ſhows, that the baptiſm which was to ſuperſede his, was to be of a different and a ſpiritual nature, as appears by theſe words: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to bear: he ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt and with fire: whoſe fan is in his hand; and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather the wheat into his garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."* On another occaſion John alſo ſays: "He muſt increaſe, but I muſt decreaſe."† From theſe expreſſions, as well as from others in the new Teſtament, we are induced to believe that the "one Baptiſm,"‡ which now remains neceſſary to the church of Chriſt, is that of the Spirit; that which, according to the foregoing inſtructive allegory, cleanſes the heart; and which the apoſtle Peter informs us, does not conſiſt in putting away the filth of the fleſh, but in procuring for us "the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt."§

The practice of Water Baptiſm is principally

* Mat. iii. 11 to 12.
† John iii. 30.
‡ Ephes. iv. 5.
§ 1 Pet. iii. 21.

defended by the direction given by our Saviour to his disciples, after his resurrection, when he addressed them in this manner; "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,"† &c. But as we differ from most others in the construction of this passage, it will be proper to enter into a particular consideration of it.

It is to be regretted, that Christians have been so habituated to unite Baptism and Water together in their view, that they seem almost to forget, that there is a Baptism without Water by the Spirit. There are many passages in scripture, where the words Baptize and Baptism are used in a figurative sense, and in which it is evident no allusion to the use of water is intended. This is peculiarly the case, where these words are used by our blessed Lord, who appears never to have used them in reference to Water, except where he expressly defines the application; unless it can be proved to be intended in the passage in Matthew now under consideration; but which we think cannot be proved. There are two instances in which, it is apprehended, all will agree that Water could not be intended: the first is, the question put to the sons of Zebedee: "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of; and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"* By these and similar expressions in the succeeding verse, it is evident that Water cannot be understood; and, indeed, it is generally agreed, that both the baptism and

† Mat. xxviii. 19. * Mark x. 38.

the cup allude to a ſtate of deep ſuffering and affliction. This is alſo the obvious meaning of the expreſſion in Luke: "I have a baptiſm to be baptized with; and how am I ſtraitened till it be accompliſhed."†

From theſe applications of the words Baptize and Baptiſm, it appears, that they were at that time frequently uſed in a figurative manner; and we think ourſelves warranted in applying the foregoing paſſage in Matthew, with another in Mark, chap. xvi. v. 16. to an inward and ſpiritual Baptiſm. This conſtruction is much corroborated by rendering the former paſſage, as the original Greek evidently implies, "Baptizing them *into* the name of the Father," &c. By this expreſſion, we apprehend is to be underſtood, the introducing of the believers into a feeling ſenſe of the power of God in Chriſt, by the influences of the Holy Spirit; all which the apoſtles were no doubt frequently made inſtrumental in producing in the hearts of their hearers. This application of the Word "Name," as ſymbolical of the Divine power,* is not uncommon in holy writ; and we conceive that no reaſonable objection can be made to it. Thus the expreſſions of our Lord unite with thoſe of the apoſtle Paul: "So many as were baptized into Chriſt Jeſus, were baptized into his death:"‡ and again, "As many as have

† Luke xii. 50.

* See the Concordances of Cruden and Taylor, under the Word "Name."

‡ Romans vi. 3.

been baptized into Chriſt, have put on Chriſt†." That theſe expreſſions have no alluſion to Water Baptiſm appears to us evident from the context; and particularly from the following expreſſion of the ſame apoſtle: "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body;—and have been all made to drink into one Spirit ‡."

It may be alleged, that the apoſtles underſtood the command in Matthew as applying to Water Baptiſm, and practiſed it accordingly. That they made uſe of baptiſm with water, has been already admitted; but that they did it in conſequence of this command, is not eaſy to prove. But ſuppoſing this to have been the caſe, it appears from various circumſtances, that even the apoſtles were "ſlow of heart to believe" and underſtand this command, as well as other ſcriptures relating to the goſpel diſpenſation: for notwithſtanding the expreſs charge to "go and teach all nations" connected with the words in diſpute, we find how difficult a matter it was to bring the apoſtles to this acknowledgment: "Then hath God alſo to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."* Such, it is evident, was their attachment to the Jewiſh nation and law, that they ſlowly and gradually relinquiſhed many of thoſe ceremonies which were attached to them; and with ſome difficulty excuſed the Gentile converts from an adherence to them. The apoſtle Paul was, however, more quickly introduced into the ſpirituality of the goſpel diſpenſation; and we think it is clear, that he

† Gal. iii. 27. ‡ 1 Cor. xii. 13. * Acts xi. 18.

did not underſtand our Lord's command, Matthew xxviii. 19. as enjoining the practice of Water Baptiſm; concerning which it is univerſally agreed that he was ſpeaking, when he thanked God that he had baptized ſo very few as he mentions, out of the great numbers converted by him at Corinth to the Chriſtian faith; "For Chriſt (ſays he) ſent me not to baptize, but to preach the goſpel †."

It has been argued, that this expreſſion of the apoſtle is general, and only implies that Baptiſm was not the principal part of his miſſion. But we have at leaſt an equal right to conſider the words in their common acceptation; and as ſhowing that, however the apoſtle might occaſionally uſe Water Baptiſm, as a mode of initiating converts into the Chriſtian church, yet he did not conſider it as a part of his commiſſion; and conſequently not eſſential to the Chriſtian religion, nor to the ſoul's ſalvation. If he had conſidered it neceſſary to theſe important objects, it is difficult to conceive how he could ſolemnly thank God for the omiſſion of it.

Another argument in favour of Water Baptiſm is urged from the following query of Peter, on the converſion of Cornelius and his family: "Can any man forbid Water, that theſe ſhould not be baptized* ?" &c. Now it appears very probable from this query, that it was a matter of doubt among the Chriſtians of that time, whether Water Baptiſm was neceſſary to be continued; and that Peter on this, as well as on ſome other occaſions, inclined to the continuance of a cere-

† 1 Cor. i. 17. * Acts x. 47.

mony, at leaſt partly Jewiſh. How cloſely even the apoſtles were attached to the Moſaic law, and how ſlowly their minds opened to the goſpel diſpenſation, have been already remarked. Notwithſtanding the various predictions of the prophets, and the direct command of our Saviour himſelf after his reſurrection, it ſtill required an extraordinary viſion from heaven to convince Peter, that "Of a truth God is no reſpecter of perſons; but, in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted with him*." It was about ten years after this circumſtance, that the apoſtles and elders came together, to conſider of the propriety of exempting the Gentile converts from the rite of circumciſion; and it was not till after "there had been much diſputing," that they concluded not to impoſe this yoke upon them. Although Peter was preſent at this conference, and earneſtly promoted the deciſion of it; yet it was, I apprehend, after this time, that the apoſtle Paul had occaſion to blame him for his changeable conduct towards the Gentiles, with reſpect to ſome Jewiſh cuſtoms†. From all theſe circumſtances, we may account for Peter's continuing the practice of Water Baptiſm, as connected with that diſpenſation, under which he had been educated. However, we have reaſon to believe that his views on this ſubject enlarged, as his experience in the ſervice of the goſpel increaſed; for we find him ſeveral years after, in one of his epiſtles, deſcrib-

* Acts x. 34 & 35. † Gal. ii. 11, 12, 13.

ing the baptiſm that "doth now ſave us*" in this manner: "Not the putting away the filth of the fleſh; but the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God†:" a deſcription by no means applicable to water baptiſm, which as it was then adminiſtered by immerſion, did put away the filth of the fleſh; and of which we may ſurely ſay, as was ſaid of "meats and drinks, and of divers waſhings," that it "could not make perfect, as pertaining to the conſcience ‡;" they being impoſed only until the time of reformation; by which is generally underſtood the goſpel diſpenſation.

In conſidering the various arguments on this ſubject, part of the diverſity of ſentiment appears to lie in the difficulty there ſometimes is, to determine betwixt the literal and the figurative uſe of words, which relate to it. Even water as well as fire is ſometimes uſed figuratively. To be "born of *water* and the Spirit‖," has been conſidered, and we think rightly conſidered, by § ſome who believed in the propriety of Water Baptiſm, as figurative an expreſſion, as being baptized "with

* 1 Pet. iii. 21. ‡ Heb. ix. 9 & 10.

† There appears to be an inaccuracy in our tranſlation of the verſe preceding this paſſage. The "eight ſouls were ſaved," not by, but from or through the water; and many tranſlators render it in this ſenſe. Alſo the Greek word rendered "figure", is "ἀντίτυπον," and means antitype; which in this place gives a different idea of the meaning of the apoſtle.

‖ John iii. 5. § Calvin, Grotius, Piscator, &c.

the Holy Ghoſt and with *fire*†;" and we ſhould remember the explanation, which the evangeliſt himſelf gives of our Saviour's uſe of the word Water: "This ſpake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him ſhould receive ‡."

It is frequently ſaid, that Water Baptiſm is appointed as a ſubſtitute for Circumciſion. In anſwer to this, I would firſt query, from what part of the New Teſtament can the appointment of one inſtead of the other be proved? Can it be ſuppoſed, that if our Saviour, or his apoſtles, had conſidered it in this point of view, that they would have given no intimation of it? I apprehend that not a ſingle text, which will bear ſuch a conſtruction, can be produced. On the contrary, there are very ſtrong arguments to be brought againſt this ſuppoſition, from the epiſtles of the apoſtle Paul. He frequently ſpeaks of circumciſion as being no longer a religious obligation. If Water Baptiſm was to have been its ſubſtitute, the occaſion to mention it was almoſt neceſſary and unavoidable. Yet he is not only ſilent on the ſubject of Water Baptiſm, as the ſubſtitute of Circumciſion; but he even ſhows what is its ſubſtitute. "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumciſion which is outward in the fleſh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumciſion is that of the heart, in the ſpirit, and not in the letter; whoſe praiſe is not of men but of God*." In the epiſtle to the Galatians, the apoſtle writes much on the ſubject of circumciſion, but never

† Mat. iii. 11. ‡ John vii. 39. * Rom. ii. 28 & 29.

mentions any other ſubſtitute for it, than "Faith which worketh by love," and a "new creature†."

What has been ſaid reſpecting Water Baptiſm, is intended to apply to it, as it was originally adminiſtered by immerſion; and in which manner, I conceive, if it be a religious obligation, it can only be rightly adminiſtered. But it is a ſingular fact, that by far the greater number of the advocates for Water Baptiſm, and thoſe who are moſt apt to reflect on us for laying it aſide, never practiſe it themſelves; but have ſubſtituted for it, the ſprinkling of a little water in the face of the perſon baptized; and this they apply to infants more than to adults. Now this I think may, with confidence, be aſſerted, that the Sprinkling of Infants is a ceremony, which has neither precept nor example in the holy Scriptures; all the arguments for it being drawn from equivocal ſuppoſitions. For any, therefore, to cenſure us for the diſuſe of Water Baptiſm, who have themſelves laid aſide the uſe of it, and ſubſtituted ſomething elſe in its ſtead, is not a little extraordinary.—Which way ſoever it is adminiſtered, it may be an innocent ceremony to thoſe who conſider it as a religious duty.

But although this ceremony may be innocent in itſelf, there are ſome circumſtances attending its adminiſtration, at leaſt by the church of England, which may be ſeriouſly injurious. To ſay, after a child has paſſed this ceremony; "We yield thee hearty thanks, moſt merciful Father, that it hath pleaſed thee to regenerate this infant with thy

† Gal. v. 6. and vi. 15.

Holy Spirit; to receive him for thy own child by adoption; and to incorporate him into thy holy church," is what, I think, neither reaſon nor revelation will ſupport; and if it is ſeriouſly believed, muſt lead thoſe who have paſſed through this ceremony, when they arrive to years of conſideration, to a very miſtaken apprehenſion of their own ſtate.

Another part of this ceremony, and which reſults from adminiſtering it to infants, appears to me to be very objectionable. That which I allude to is, the engagement which thoſe enter into, who become ſureties for baptized children. In performing this ceremony, the prieſt ſays: "This infant muſt alſo faithfully, for his part, promiſe by you that are his ſureties (until he come of age to take it upon himſelf), that he will renounce the devil and all his works, and conſtantly believe God's Holy Word, and obediently keep his commandments. I demand, therefore, Doſt thou, in the name of this child, renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous deſires of the ſame, and the carnal deſires of the fleſh, ſo that thou wilt not follow nor be led by them? Anſwer, I renounce them all." Now I appeal to thoſe who are well acquainted with this practice, whether they who thus engage, do really perform their engagement. Does it clearly appear (as it certainly ought to do) that they always intend it when they make it? Is their own conduct ſuch as correſponds with the engagement, into which they have entered? And do they afterwards follow up this engagement by

means adapted to the end? Or, is not this ſolemn covenant, which is attended with the moſt ſolemn circumſtances, often lightly entered into, and as lightly violated? Let thoſe who are promoting a practice, involving in it a conduct ſo repugnant both to religion and morality, ſeriouſly conſider what they are doing; and then I believe they will ſee this practice in an awful point of view; and not be very cenſorious on us, for laying aſide a ceremony, which we think we have good reaſon to believe is not an eſſential part of Chriſtianity; and of which their own practice abundantly convinces us, that the abuſe greatly exceeds the uſe.

We are, however, ſenſible, that the abuſe of any thing, in itſelf good and neceſſary, is not a ſufficient reaſon for its diſuſe, nor have I reſted my arguments upon it. It is now left to the ſerious conſideration of the reader, whether Water Baptiſm can be conſidered as an eſſential of Chriſtianity, or, whether it may not be regarded as one of thoſe "divers waſhings," which were only temporarily impoſed; and which were gradually to vaniſh away and ceaſe; "Chriſt being come, a high Prieſt of good things to come,—by his own blood, entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us*:" Thus, "blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was againſt us, which was contrary to us, he took it out of the way, nailing it to his croſs †.

After what has been ſaid on the ſubject of religious ceremonies in general, and on Baptiſm in

* Heb. ix. 11 & 12. † Col. ii. 14.

particular, it may not be neceſſary to add much on what is called the Lord's Supper. We admit that a ceremony, under this name, was in uſe in the primitive church; and moſt probably aroſe from the circumſtances which occurred, when our bleſſed Lord ate the laſt paſſover with his diſciples: but we do not think that thence an obligation ariſes upon Chriſtians in general to retain this ceremony. It was, like Baptiſm, derived from a Jewiſh cuſtom; and when that diſpenſation was about to be ſuperſeded by that of the goſpel, it appears (as has already been obſerved) that this change was gradual, and the former diſpenſation not wholly laid aſide at once. Admitting therefore, as we do, all the circumſtances related on this ſubject; we cannot conceive, that a recommendation by Chriſt, to his moſt intimate friends and immediate followers, that in future, when they kept the paſſover, they ſhould have their dear Lord and Maſter particularly in remembrance, does conſtitute an obligation upon all thoſe, that ſhould hereafter believe on his name: To deſire them to eat that bread and drink that cup in remembrance of him, with this addition, "as oft as ye drink it,"* is, we believe, a very inſufficient foundation for the ſuperſtructure which has been raiſed upon it.

It has already been remarked, that the waſhing of one another's feet was ſtrongly recommended by our bleſſed Lord, and might, with at leaſt equal propriety, be now enjoined as a religious obligation on Chriſtians. It may be remembered, that our

* 1 Cor. xi. 25.

Lord, having washed the feet of his disciples, afterwards addressed them in this manner: "Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and—so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet: for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you†." Can any thing so clear, or so positive, be produced in favour of the Lord's Supper, or even of Water Baptism? nevertheless, we do not hear of this practice, thus plainly enjoined, being recommended at this day, at least by Protestants, as a Christian duty. And why? Because it is considered, as we consider the others, of a local or temporary nature. If a church or congregation of Christians can in one case, dispense with the use of a religious ceremony, it certainly has the same right to do so in another. The washing of the feet was a mark of humility, as the supper was of love; and where the thing signified is felt and acted upon, the emblem might, in our apprehension, be either used or disused, as Christians may consider most conducive to the real advantage of the church. We believe, however, that retaining these ceremonies has, in general, a tendency to settle the minds of the professors of Christianity in unnecessary forms; and to prevent their aspiring sufficiently after the practice of real and vital Christianity. The importance attached to this ceremony, we conceive, justifies our apprehensions in this respect; and the abuse which frequently attends its ad-

† John xiii. 12, 13, 14, 15.

miniſtration, muſt, we think, in this caſe, as in that of Baptiſm, greatly exceed its uſe. We doubt not the ſincerity and piety, with which this ceremony is frequently adminiſtered and received; yet we conceive, that the true Lord's Supper requires no ſuch elementary mediums as bread and wine for its participation; but that it is the ſame, and the qualification to receive it the ſame, as is pointed out by this language to one of the churches: "Behold, I ſtand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will ſup with him, and he with me*." This inward communion, this ſpiritual participation of the Lord's Supper, is that which we wiſh to promote the experience of, among the profeſſors of Chriſtianity; believing with the apoſtle, that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt: for he that in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt, is acceptable to God, and approved of men.†"

Our diſſent from the generality of Chriſtians, on the ſubjects of Water Baptism and the Supper, and our diſuſe of theſe and other ceremonies, have brought upon us much cenſure from our fellow Chriſtians; ſome of whom have even denied us a right to that name, conceiving that we could not be ſincere believers in Chriſt. But our diſuſe of theſe ceremonies is ſo far from proceeding from any inferior views of Chriſtianity, that it ariſes from our very high opinion of it; on which

* Rev. iii. 20. † Rom. xiv. 17 & 18.

ground we cannot reconcile theſe external rites to the ſpirituality of the goſpel-diſpenſation. We believe in Chriſt Jeſus, the Saviour of men; we believe that he has "aboliſhed in his fleſh, the enmity, even the law of commandments, contained in ordinances*;" that "he waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood†;" and that he is "our paſſover, who is ſacrificed for us‡."

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE OF DAYS AND TIMES.

Exemption from Cenſure claimed for their Non-obſervance. The Obſervance diſapproved by the Apoſtle Paul.—More injurious than beneficial to Religion, eſpecially Feſtivals. Setting apart one Day in ſeven approved.—On public Faſts, &c.—Concluſion from Rom. xiv. 5, &c.

WE truſt that, both on this and the preceding ſubject, we may claim that exemption from cenſure, which the apoſtle granted to the church at Coloſſe: "Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in reſpect of an holy-day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days, which are a ſhadow of things to come; but the body is of Chriſt.§"

By the law of Moſes, many days and times were

* Eph. ii. 15. † Rev. i. 5. ‡ 1 Cor. v. 7.
§ Col. ii. 16.

ſet apart for the commemoration of various extraordinary circumſtances, and for other conſiderations connected with that diſpenſation. Some of theſe were, for a time, obſerved by the primitive Chriſtians, eſpecially by the Jewiſh converts, whoſe attachment to their law (as has already been obſerved), not only induced them to retain many of its ceremonies, but alſo to endeavour to impoſe them on the Gentile Chriſtians. This the apoſtle Paul was particularly concerned to break through, and to aſſert the freedom of the goſpel diſpenſation, from the obligation of theſe legal obſervances; and though he wiſhed the believers not to judge one another, either for obſerving, or not obſerving days and times; yet he could not but conſider it an unfavourable ſymptom in the Galatians, that they ſhould, after having laid them aſide, return to the obſervance of them: "How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye deſire again to be in bondage? Ye obſerve days, and months, and times, and years: I am afraid of you, leſt I have beſtowed upon you labour in vain."*

Unleſs thoſe who are in this practice, can prove ſome command or injunction for it in the New Teſtament, of which I know not any, I conceive but little more need be ſaid on this ſubject. If any think the obſervance tends to promote piety and virtue, we would not judge thoſe who are inclined to make this uſe of it: but I apprehend it is a fact of too much public notoriety, not to be acknowledged, that obſervances of this kind,

* Gal. iv. 9, 10 & 11.

particularly the feſtivals, are in general ſo conducted as to promote diſſipation and intemperance, much more than piety and virtue; and, therefore, in every point of view, we think we are well warranted in laying ſuch obſervances aſide.

We however conſider the ſetting apart of one day in ſeven for ceſſation from buſineſs, and for religious ſervices, no more than a reaſonable duty; and we encourage the obſervance of it among our members. It has been our practice from the commencement of our religious ſociety; and although we do not conſider the Firſt (or any) day of the week, as poſſeſſing a ſuperior degree of holineſs; yet we believe conſiderable advantages to religion and virtue ariſe, not only from a proper dedication and employment of it, but even from the imperfect obſervance, with which it is on the whole regarded.

We are alſo ſenſible that the duties of humiliation and thankſgiving are frequently incumbent upon us; yet, from the conviction that the qualification to perform theſe duties, ſhould proceed from a higher ſource than man, we do not conſider it right to unite with thoſe who ſet apart particular times, and adopt ſet forms, for theſe purpoſes. Beſides this general reaſon, the occaſion is often ſuch as we can, by no means, join with. When war, or the ſucceſſes or defeats attendant upon it, are the occaſion of public thankſgiving or humiliation, our ſentiments on the inconſiſtency of war with the ſpirit of Chriſtianity, prevent our uniting in prayer or praiſes for victories which involve the deſtruction of our fellow-creatures; and by

which, there is too much reaſon to fear, many ſouls are ſent unprepared into an awful eternity. By joining on theſe occaſions, we conceive that we ſhould act inconſiſtently with thoſe peaceable principles which our bleſſed Lord has ſo ſtrongly inculcated, and which will be more particularly treated of in the following chapter.

After giving theſe reaſons for our diſſent on this ſubject, I ſhall conclude with the words of the apoſtle Paul: "One man eſteemeth one day above another: another eſteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully perſuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it to the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it.*—"Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a ſtumbling-block, or an occaſion to fall, in his brother's way."†

* Rom. xiv. 5, 6. † Ibid. 13.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON OATHS AND WAR.

Quotations from Matt. v.—Oaths unneceſſary.—Arguments, in Favour of them anſwered.—Arguments in Favour of War anſwered.—The Chriſtian Religion the only Remedy for this Evil.

"YE have heard that it hath been ſaid by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not forſwear thyſelf; but ſhalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I ſay unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footſtool—But let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatſoever is more than theſe cometh of evil."

"Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I ſay unto you, that ye reſiſt not evil.—Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy: but I ſay unto you, Love your enemies; bleſs them that curſe you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you and perſecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his ſun to riſe on the evil and on the good; and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt."*

* Matt. v. 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 43, 44, 45.

After reciting theſe ſtrong and unequivocal injunctions of our divine Maſter, I have pauſed to conſider, whether I ſhould ſay a word more on the ſubject of them; their own force and perſpicuity ſeeming to require no comment. I ſhall therefore make none upon them; but, after ſaying that upon theſe, and other ſimilar paſſages in the ſcriptures, we ground our teſtimony againſt oaths and war, ſhall proceed to conſider the objections that are made to the adoption of precepts ſo clearly conveyed to us, and the practice of which would be attended with ſo many benefits to mankind.

With reſpect to oaths, the apparent neceſſity of them is ſo ſmall, and their real injury ſo great, by profaning the ſacred name, that, it is preſumed, very few religiouſly-minded people will be diſpoſed to plead in their favour: and, indeed, it appears to me difficult to find an objection of any importance, to laying them wholly aſide.

The principal arguments uſed by thoſe who are diſpoſed to plead for them, muſt however be conſidered. One of theſe is, that the Almighty is ſometimes ſaid, in ſcripture, to make uſe of an oath. To this it may be anſwered, that the Almighty could not ſwear as man ſwears, there being none greater than himſelf to whom he could appeal; or to whom he was amenable for the truth of his declaration. Beſides which, we apprehend, that what he might do, as ſovereign Lord, may not be proper for us to do as dependent creatures, whoſe higheſt perfection is obedience to his will; which being expreſsly revealed to us in this inſtance by

his beloved Son, our obvious duty is to comply with it.

Another argument in favour of ſwearing before magiſtrates, is advanced from the circumſtance of our Lord's being ſilent before the high prieſt, until he adjured him by the living God. That the high prieſt intended formally to adminiſter a judicial oath to our Saviour, is what, I apprehend, the context will not ſupport. It rather appears, that Caiaphas, being irritated by our Lord's ſilence, made uſe of this expreſſion in the violence of his temper, and not in a judicial capacity; and until the latter can be proved, our Lord's ſimple reply "Thou haſt ſaid,"* in no degree partakes of the nature of an oath.

A third argument in favour of the uſe of oaths, is drawn from ſome expreſſions of the apoſtle Paul; as, "God is my witneſs;"† "I charge thee before God,"‡ &c. Theſe, and other ſimilar expreſſions, do not, however, appear to conſtitute an oath; nor would they be admitted as ſuch in a court of judicature. In the beginning of our ſociety, ſuch expreſſions were ſometimes offered to magiſtrates, inſtead of an oath, but always refuſed.§ Beſides, if theſe words of the apoſtle are to be conſidered as oaths, they would prove too much, by

* Matt. xxvi. 64. † Rom. i. 9. ‡ 2 Tim. iv. 1.

§ The firſt affirmation granted to our ſociety inſtead of an oath, was a declaration "in the preſence of Almighty God." But this not affording univerſal relief, the legiſlature afterwards indulged us with the preſent form of atteſtation, in which there is no uſe of the ſacred Name.

ſhowing that he uſed them in private correſpondence or communication; which thoſe who plead for judicial ſwearing, agree our Lord meant to prohibit by the command, "Swear not at all."

Some have alſo argued in favour of judicial ſwearing from an alluſion to it in the epiſtle to the Hebrews, chap. vi. 16. But ſurely the incidental mention of a general practice among "men," is not a ſufficient argument for the rectitude of that practice; nor a proof that it was allowed by Chriſtians, who, in compariſon with the reſt of mankind, were then few in number.

It may perhaps be ſtill argued, that the ends of juſtice could not be anſwered without an oath. To this it may be replied, that if the ſame penalty were annexed to a falſe affirmation as to a falſe oath, thoſe whoſe conſciences are not ſufficiently tender to preſerve them from giving a falſe affirmation, would find, in the penalty, as much terror from offending againſt one, as againſt the other.

It has (as before obſerved) been alleged by ſome, that this prohibition of oaths relates only to common converſation; but the context will by no means ſupport this conſtruction, as will appear from the following conſiderations. Firſt, Profane ſwearing was prohibited under the law, and it is evident that Chriſt was forbidding what the law had allowed. Secondly, Swearing is here contraſted with forſwearing or falſe ſwearing. Now this being contrary to the law, whether before a magiſtrate, or in private converſation, the command not to ſwear at all muſt be equally extenſive. Our conſtruction of the command of Chriſt is further

confirmed by the exhortation of his diſciple and apoſtle James: "Above all things, my brethren, ſwear not; neither by heaven, neither by earth, neither by *any other oath*: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; leſt ye fall into condemnation."*

We come now to the arguments uſed in defence of war, the principal of which I apprehend to be, that it is unavoidable and neceſſary. Whilſt mankind are diſpoſed to live under the influence of their paſſions, and to ſacrifice their dearest intereſts to their avarice, or to their ambition, this plea will not be wanting. But let us conſider what proofs have been given, that war is really unavoidable. Has any nation fairly made the experiment, and failed? Where is the country that has regulated its conduct by that juſtice, that liberality, that love, that humility, and that meekneſs, which Chriſtianity requires, and yet has found war unavoidable? Can we contemplate the characters of the individuals, who have compoſed the rulers of nations, and ſay, that ſuch have been the diſpoſitions which regulated their public and private conduct; and that ſtill they have not been able to preſerve their country from war and bloodſhed? Till all this can be clearly proved, the argument from neceſſity is of no weight. But, that I may not be thought to reaſon chimerically, I ſhall ſhow that a people have exiſted, who acting upon theſe Chriſtian principles, preſerved their country from war and bloodſhed, even while their neighbours

* James v. 12.

were frequently involved in them. Pennſylvania, it is generally known, was originally the property of one called a Quaker, who filled moſt of the offices of the government with perſons of his own perſuaſion. Had not the conduct of this people towards their neighbours, both Indians and Europeans, been recorded by men totally unconnected with the ſociety, my relation might appear partial and intereſted; but hiſtory, impartial hiſtory, has tranſmitted the conduct of this people to poſterity in ſuch a manner, as renders it unneceſſary for me to ſay more, than that, ſo long as they retained their aſcendancy in the ſtate, which was about ſixty or ſeventy years, neither internal nor external war was permitted to diſturb their peaceful habitations. We do not ſay that occaſions of difference never occurred: but other means of ſettling their differences, than thoſe generally reſorted to, were purſued; and, if not found ſucceſsful, ſubmiſſion was wiſely preferred to the precarious and violent deciſion of the ſword.—If it cannot be ſhown that men, living and acting in a truly Chriſtian ſpirit, have found war to be neceſſary and unavoidable, the argument aſſumed muſt be conſidered as deſtitute of foundation.

Great pains are taken to make a diſtinction betwixt offenſive, and defenſive war; and whilſt the former is generally reprobated, the latter meets with many advocates. It muſt, I ſuppoſe, be admitted, that in almoſt every war, both parties profeſs to act on the principle of defence: and where is the criterion which accurately determines the difference? But ſuppoſing an extreme caſe, and that without any provocation, one man, or one nation, is

attacked by another, is there no dependence to be placed on a ſuperintending Providence? and have religion and virtue no reſources but in the arm of fleſh? Were our minds brought into a true Chriſtian ſtate, the protection of Divine Providence would be humbly and ſafely relied upon: ſo far, at leaſt, as to prevent us from ſeeking redreſs, by means deſtructive of the lives of our fellow-creatures.

Such is the natural ſtate of mankind, that "offences muſt needs come;" but it ought to be remembered, that "woe is to him, by whom the offence cometh." Were thoſe diſpoſitions, recommended by our bleſſed Lord, cheriſhed by that which conſiders itſelf the offended party, it would ſoon appear, that war is not ſo neceſſary and unavoidable, as it is by many imagined.

If ſound policy were adopted, it would unite with true Chriſtianity in eradicating this diſtreſſing evil. Can any thing in this world compenſate for the deſolation and miſery, which war occaſions in the earth? And when, to the loſs of life and property, with almoſt all worldly comforts, is added the ſtill more important loſs, which religion and virtue ſuſtain from a ſtate of war, and from the military life in general, it is difficult to conceive how men, who really have what they think the good of their country at heart, and who alſo conſider themſelves entitled to the denomination of Chriſtians, can promote a practice, which is productive of ſo many, both natural and moral evils. In contemplating this diſtreſſing ſubject, we find it neceſſary to have recourſe to that Chriſtian charity,

which it is our duty to extend to thoſe who differ from us in principle and practice. I wiſh, however, for myſelf and my fellow profeſſors, that we may faithfully maintain our principles on this ſubject; being at the ſame time careful to ſupport the doctrine of peace, in the ſpirit of peace: then we may be made inſtrumental in promoting the increaſe of the government of the Son of God, whoſe introduction into this world was announced by an angel, accompanied "with a multitude of the heavenly hoſt, praiſing God, and ſaying, Glory to God in the higheſt, and on earth peace, good-will towards men."*

There are a few arguments brought forward in favour of war, from ſome paſſages in the New Teſtament, which it will be proper to conſider. Of theſe, the principal one is, the expreſſion of our Lord to his diſciples: "He that hath no ſword, let him ſell his garment and buy one."† This paſſage is generally conſidered to be of doubtful ſignification; and ſome,‡ who do not agree with us in our ſentiments on war, conſider this expreſſion of our Lord as allegorical. When the diſciples replied, "Here are two ſwords," he gave this ſhort anſwer, "It is enough."§ This ſeems to imply that they did not underſtand his meaning; for if he had intended the external ſword, how could two be ſufficient for the number of the diſciples, and at a time when they were about to be attacked

* Luke ii. 13 and 14. † Ibid. xxii. 36.

‡ See Dr. Edwards on the Style, &c. of the Scripture, p. 126. § Luke xxii. 38.

by a multitude, that came out, as against a thief, with ſwords and staves. But what ſeems clearly to ſhow that our Saviour did not intend to recommend the uſe of the ſword in a literal ſenſe, is the circumſtance which occurred very ſoon after he had uſed the expreſſion under conſideration: for we find, that when Peter, on the very ſame day, made uſe of a ſword in defence of his maſter he was reproved by him in this manner: "Put up again thy ſword into his place; for all they that take the ſword, ſhall periſh with the ſword."* It may alſo be added, that it was on the ſame, or the ſucceeding day, that our Lord ſaid to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my ſervants fight, that I ſhould not be delivered to the Jews."† Now when theſe important and concurring circumſtances are conſidered, can it be ſuppoſed, that our Lord intended to recommend to his diſciples the uſe of the ſword, either in defence of him, or themſelves, or on any other occaſion?

Another circumſtance brought forward as an argument in favour of war, is the converſion of Cornelius,‡ a centurion in the Roman army, and no account given of his having relinquiſhed a military life. As we have not any further account of this pious centurion, than that of his converſion, and the circumſtances attending it, no argument of any weight can be drawn from this relation. Some ancient writers inform us, that the primitive Chriſtians did not fight; and we may therefore

* Mat. xxvi. 52. † John xviii. 36. ‡ Acts x

reaſonably ſuppoſe, that if the centurion continued firm in his attachment to the Chriſtian religion, he abandoned his military life. At any rate, the ſilence of the ſacred hiſtorian cannot, with propriety, be brought forward as an argument in ſupport of war; or as ſhowing it to be conſiſtent with the Chriſtian diſpenſation.

It is further argued, that the expreſſion of the apoſtle Paul, who ſays reſpecting the magiſtrate, "He beareth not the ſword in vain," † is an implied acknowledgment of the propriety of uſing the ſword in a military manner. This argument, I conceive, ariſes from a misapplication of the paſſage. The ſword here alluded to, we have reaſon to ſuppoſe, was only an emblem of civil power. We are informed that one of the chief magiſtrates in Rome (and it is to the Romans the apoſtle uſeth this expreſſion) had a ſword hung up in his court, as an emblem of his power;* and we know that in this country, eſpecially in corporate towns, the chief magiſtrates have a ſword borne before them on particular occaſions, as an emblem of office. But if the ſword was even uſed in the puniſhment of offenders, it would be no fair argument in favour of uſing it for the purpoſes of war, and thoſe devaſtations attendant on this lamentable evil.

Theſe, and ſuch as theſe, are the arguments uſed by many in ſupport of an evil, which, in its conſequences, ſhocks humanity, deſtroys morality, weakens the influence of religion, and entails on man-

† Rom. xiii. 4.

* See Godwin's Roman Antiquities, p. 164.

kind miſeries incalculable and indeſcribable. Were the ingenuity of man as much exerciſed to put an end to this calamity, as his ambition is to ſupport it, we ſhould ſoon find the benefits reſulting from this diſpoſition. But it is religion, it is the Chriſtian religion, which alone provides an adequate remedy for this malignant diſorder; and when mankind are willing to receive it, in the love, the meekneſs, and the humility, which its divine author inculcated, this with other ſimilar predictions reſpecting him will be fulfilled: "He ſhall judge among the nations, and work conviction* among many people: and they ſhall beat their ſwords into plough-ſhares, and their ſpears into pruning hooks: nation ſhall not lift up ſword againſt nation; neither ſhall they learn war any more."†

* See Lowth's Tranſlation of Iſaiah.

† Iſa. ii. 4.

CHAPTER IX.

ON AMUSEMENTS.

General Remarks on Amuſements.—Rules reſpecting them.—Dancing and Muſic.—Neceſſity of properly regulating Amuſements for Youth.—Propriety of avoiding Temptations.

THE little benefit, and great injury, which attend moſt of thoſe enjoyments, that go under the name of amuſements, have induced us to bring them into leſs compaſs, than the generality of Chriſtians do: not that we are averſe to ſuch relaxations from bodily or mental exerciſe, as become rational beings, and true Chriſtians: but the repugnancy of a great part of thoſe pleaſures to religion and virtue, and the avidity with which they are purſued, are cauſes of ſorrow to thoſe who have at heart the real intereſts, temporal and ſpiritual, of their fellow creatures.

There are three rules relating to amuſements, by which our conduct ſhould be regulated.

1.—To avoid all thoſe which tend needleſsly to oppreſs and injure any part of the animal creation. Of this claſs are cock-fighting and horſe-racing; alſo hunting, &c. when engaged in for diverſion and pleaſure.

2.—To abſtain from ſuch as are connected with a ſpirit of hazardous enterprize; by which the property and temporal happineſs of individuals and families, are often made to depend on the moſt

precarious circumſtances; and the gain of one frequently entails miſery on many. Of this claſs are all games in which property is ſtaked.

3.—To avoid ſuch as expoſe us to unneceſſary temptations, with reſpect to our virtue; or which diſſipate the mind, ſo as to render a return to civil and religious duties ungrateful. Of this kind, ſtage entertainments are peculiarly to be avoided; with various other places of public amuſements, which have a tendency to corrupt the heart, or to alienate it from the love and fear of God.

The amuſements of dancing and muſic, we think, alſo come within this claſs. It may be alleged, that theſe might be practiſed in ſuch a manner, as not to fall under the definition given. Our ſociety, however, thinks it right to abſtain from thoſe amuſements; both becauſe of their frequent connexion with places and circumſtances, which are highly objectionable; and becauſe we conceive they can ſcarcely be entered into, without an improper employment of that time which we are required not to waſte, but to paſs in fear, and to redeem.

Were our minds rightly regulated, and our affections ſet on things above, very little, which is called amuſement, would be thought neceſſary for thoſe who are arrived at mature age. With reſpect to youth, it peculiarly behoves thoſe who have the care of them, to ſee that ſuch amuſements only be adopted, as may not prove injurious to their religion or virtue; but which may tend to promote their poſſeſſing a ſound mind in a ſound body. Were amuſements thus reſtrained and re-

gulated, great would be the benefit ariſing from ſuch reſtrictions: but when we ſee how ardently many, not only of the youth, but even of thoſe who are conſiderably advanced in years, ruſh into diſſipating and corrupting pleaſures, it is not to be wondered at, that vice and irreligion ſhould prevail to an alarming degree.

We ought ever to retain a ſenſe of our own weakneſs, and of our aptitude to fall into temptations, when they are preſented to us. Were we properly concerned for our own moſt important intereſt, that of our immortal ſouls, this ſenſe would lead us to avoid, and not to run into temptation. How much thoſe amuſements are either evils themſelves, or temptations to evil, it cannot be neceſſary to point out at large to thoſe who exerciſe ſerious reflection. How neceſſary is it, therefore, to attend to the apoſtolic exhortation: "See then that ye walk circumſpectly, not as fools, but as wiſe, redeeming the time, becauſe the days are evil."*

* Epheſ. v. 15, 16.

CHAPTER X.

ON DRESS AND ADDRESS.

Our Principle for regulating Dreſs.—Scripture Paſſages in Support of it.—An objection anſwered.—Non-conformity to the World to be united with the Transformation of the Mind.—Our peculiarities of Addreſs ſupported by Reaſon, by Propriety, and by Religion. Reaſon for not taking off the Hat.—Cuſtom too much followed by Chriſtians.

ON the firſt of theſe ſubjects, our principle is, to let decency, utility, and ſimplicity, be our principal guides; and not to conform to the changeable faſhions of a vain and fluctuating world; though we occaſionally adopt alterations, which appear convenient or uſeful. This is a principle, the propriety of which, I apprehend, no one will deny; and it is eaſy to ſuppoſe, that ſuch a rule muſt make thoſe who adopt it, generally ſingular in their appearance. It is not, however, for the ſake of ſingularity, that we appear different from others; yet we have reaſon to believe, that even this ſingularity is not without its uſe. It is, in ſome reſpects, like a hedge about us; which, though it does not make the ground it incloſes rich and fruitful, yet frequently prevents thoſe intruſions, by which the labour of the huſbandman is injured or deſtroyed.

The conduct which we adopted in this re-

ſpect is ſupported by many paſſages in holy writ. "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind*," was the advice of the apoſtle to the Chriſtians, who dwelt at the ſeat of Roman grandeur and luxury; and at a time, when this grandeur and luxury had attained to their greateſt height. As the female ſex has generally been accounted moſt prone to exceſſes of this kind, the apoſtles in writing on this ſubject, have more particularly addreſſed their advices to them; thus Paul ſays, "I will—that women adorn themſelves with modeſt apparel; with ſhamefacedneſs and ſobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or coſtly array, but, which becometh women profeſſing godlineſs, with good works†." The advice of Peter on the ſame ſubject, is ſo ſimilar to this, that I apprehend it needleſs to repeat it here. See 1 Peter, ch. iii. v. 3.

It has been objected to us, that we connect religion too much with dreſs. This, I conceive, ariſes from a miſapprehenſion of our principles. We conſider ſimplicity of apparel, and a non-conformity to vain faſhions, as a moral virtue, in the ſame manner, though not to the ſame degree, as we do temperance and ſobriety. In theſe it is poſſible a man may be very exemplary, and yet be a ſtranger to true religion: but, becauſe this man wants that which ſhould be the moving ſpring of all our good actions, and perhaps, in ſome other parts of conduct, is even deficient in morality, no one, ſurely, would recommend ſuch a man to lay

* Rom. xii. 2. † 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10.

aſide that part of moral conduct, which he is already in the practice of. Thus it is with our apparel. We need not lay aſide what is right in one part of our practice, becauſe we are not thought, or do not think ourſelves, right in every thing. A man's pretenſion to religion or virtue, ſhould not be eſtimated from the plainneſs of his dreſs, and outward appearance, any more than from his poſſeſſing ſome other moral virtues, into which true religion would, no doubt, lead him.

It is, however, highly important to us, to maintain ſomething more than the form of godlineſs; and whilſt we avoid a conformity to this world, to be careful to ſeek after that divine power, which will enable us to fulfil the other part of the exhortation: "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God*." Thus, having our minds and conduct rightly regulated, we ſhall fulfil another important apoſtolic injunction: "Let not then your good be evil ſpoken of†."

In our addreſs alſo there are ſome peculiarities, which it will be proper to explain; as, our uſing the ſingular number in ſpeaking to a ſingle perſon; our diſuſe of the appellation of maſter, miſtreſs, &c. in a complimentary manner, to thoſe who do not ſtand in theſe relations to us; and our calling the months and days of the week by their numerical names, inſtead of thoſe which are derived from the heathen deities, &c. From theſe, and other

* Rom. xii. 2. † Ibid. xiv. 16.

erroneous and corrupt practices, the Spirit of truth, in which we profeſs to believe, as guiding into all truth, led our predeceſſors in religious profeſſion; and, we believe, ſtill leads us as we faithfully follow it. Our conduct in theſe reſpects is ſo well ſupported by the practices mentioned in holy writ, as well as by the ſimplicity and reaſonableneſs of it, that I apprehend none will deny the propriety, even if they will not allow the neceſſity, of it.

The origin of applying the plural number to an individual, and of giving complimentary titles to one another, will, I ſuppoſe, be acknowledged, by thoſe who have traced theſe things to their ſource, to have been vanity or pride. Beſides this conſideration, our practice of uſing the ſingular number to a ſingle perſon, and of calling one another by the proper name, is both more correct and more perſpicuous. This is alſo the caſe with reſpect to our names of days and months. Nevertheleſs, it is not by reaſon and propriety alone, that our conduct in theſe things may be ſupported. Religion, if an attention to the practice and precepts recorded in the holy Scriptures has a claim to the name of religion, alſo juſtifies our conduct. It was, no doubt, in alluſion to the complimentary, and not to the proper, uſe of the appellations of Rabbi, Father, and Maſter, that our Lord prohibited the practice among his followers. Speaking of the diſpoſition of the Scribes and Phariſees, he ſays, "they love the uppermoſt rooms at feaſts, and the chief ſeats in the ſynagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi,

Rabbi."* Then addreſſing himſelf "to the multitude and to his diſciples," he adds: "But be not ye called of men, Rabbi: for one is your maſter, even Chriſt; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called maſters: for one is your Maſter, even Chriſt†." The following expreſſions of Elihu, a pious young man mentioned in the book of Job, are alſo applicable to our preſent purpoſe: "Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's perſon; neither let me give flattering titles unto man: for I know not to give flattering titles: in ſo doing, my Maker would ſoon take me away."‡

With reſpect to the uſe of the ſingular number to a ſingle perſon, it is the uniform practice in the holy Scriptures; and indeed in all other writings, to a period of time long poſterior to the Scriptures. It is not, therefore, to be expected, that any alluſion to a contrary practice ſhould be mentioned in them. We think however, that we may conſider our conduct, in this reſpect, conſiſtent with that "form of ſound words,"§ recommended by Paul to Timothy.

The giving of the names of heathen deities, &c. to days and months, is not only inconſiſtent with "the form of ſound words" juſt mentioned; but alſo contrary to the ſpirit of the injunction given to the Iſraelites, as a preſervative from contaminating themſelves with idolatry: "In all

* Matt. xxiii. 6, 7. † Ibid. 8, 9, 10.
‡ Job xxxii. 21, 22. § 2 Tim. i. 13.

things that I have ſaid unto you, be circumſpect: and make no mention of the name of other gods; neither let it be heard out of thy mouth."* It may alſo be remembered, that when the reformation of the Jews was foretold by the prophets, theſe amongſt other things, were ſtated as a part: "I will take the name of Baalim out of her mouth;"† "I will turn to the people a pure language;"‡ and "I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they ſhall no more be remembered."§

There is another peculiarity in our conduct, on which it may be proper to ſay a few words. Our refuſal to take off the hat, as a mark of reſpect to man, is generally known. The reaſon for this is, that it is a token of reverence enjoined and uſed in our ſolemn approaches to the Supreme Being, when exerciſing the religious duties of preaching or prayer. On this account, and not from any diſreſpect to our ſuperiors, we think it right not to confound this ſolemn act of reverence to the Almighty, with the marks of reſpect to our fellow creatures. True civility and due reſpect may be better ſhown by conduct, than by compliment; and we are far from deſiring to diſmiss thoſe ſocial duties from our attention and regard.

Many are apt to plead general cuſtom, as a ſanction to practices, which, were they impartially examined, would be acknowledged to be erroneous and improper: and it is to be regretted, that the

* Exod. xxiii. 13.

a See alſo Deut. xii. 2. Joſhua xxiii. 7. Pſalm xvi. 4.

† Hoſea ii. 17. ‡ Zeph. iii. 9. § Zech. xiii. 2.

profeſſors of Chriſtianity ſhould retain ſo much that is inconſiſtent with its purity and ſimplicity. If theſe things cannot be ſtiled "the weightier matters of the law,"* and we allow they cannot; yet we believe they may be conſidered as the externals of religion, and as things which we "ought not to leave undone."

CHAPTER XI.

ON CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

Peaceableneſs of our Principles a Security to Government.—Duties of Subjects.—Suffering peaceably ſubmitted to, when active Compliance cannot be conſcientiouſly rendered.—Civil and religious Liberty valued and how beſt ſupported.

THE peaceableneſs of our principles, when applied even to enemies, affords a ſtrong ſecurity to any government under which we live, that we cannot unite in any practices, that may either injure or ſubvert it. The conſideration of this circumſtance, attended with a correſpondent conduct, has probably been the means of obtaining indulgences for ſome of our principles, which are contrary to general laws. Several of theſe principles are ſuch as generally exclude us from becoming a conſtituent part of government: what we have therefore to conſider are the duties of ſubjects.

* Matt. xxiii. 23.

Theſe duties are clearly defined in the New Teſtament; and under circumſtances which render this definition peculiarly ſtrong.—When they were enjoined, the primitive Chriſtians were frequently under perſecution; the government at that time was of a kind which is generally conſidered the worſt, and in the hands of the worſt of men; nevertheleſs, we ſee no encouragement given to any thing like ſedition or reſiſtance. On the contrary, the believers in Chriſt were taught to "be ſubject unto the higher powers,"* "to obey magiſtrates,"† and to "ſubmit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake.—As free, and not uſing your liberty for a cloak of maliciouſneſs, but as the ſervants of God."‡ Theſe are the principles on which our Society, as a body, have uniformly acted, as may be ſeen by the advices given on this ſubject, and from which the following is extracted. "We truſt we are called to ſhow forth to the world, in life and practice, that the bleſſed reign of the Meſſiah, the Prince of Peace, is begun; and we doubt not but it will proceed, till it attain its completion in the earth, when, according to the prophecies of Iſaiah and Micah, "nation ſhall not lift up ſword againſt nation; neither ſhall they learn war any more." Influenced by theſe principles, we cannot conſiſtently join with ſuch as form combinations of a hoſtile nature againſt any; much leſs in oppoſition to thoſe, placed in ſovereign or ſubordinate authority; nor can we unite with, or encourage, ſuch as revile and aſperſe them: for it is written, "Thou

* Rom. xiii. 1. † Titus iii. 1. ‡ 1 Pet. ii. 13, 16

ſhalt not ſpeak evil of the ruler of thy people."—Yearly Meeting's printed epiſtle, 1775.

But whilſt we think it right to put in practice the advices, given to the primitive Chriſtians on this ſubject, we are, as they were, under circumſtances, which ſometimes prevent us from actively complying with what the laws of the country require. Nevertheleſs, we ſubmit to the law, by ſuffering the peaceable execution of it, in caſes in which we cannot actively comply. There are duties which we owe to our conſciences and to God, with which human power cannot diſpenſe, and of which it is not a competent judge. Conſcience is God's prerogative; and when it is neither uſed as a cloak of maliciouſneſs, nor abuſed to the diſturbance of the public peace, it ought to be fully free. Our Society in this country,* though under ſome circumſtances which bear rather hard upon it, has abundant cauſe for gratitude to the government for the favours we enjoy; and it is to be hoped, that we ſhall always conduct ourſelves ſo, as to merit the continuance, and even the extenſion of them; "being obliged to demean ourſelves, not only as a grateful people, but as a Chriſtian ſociety, to live peaceably and inoffenſively under the preſent government, as we have always done, under the various revolutions of government, ever ſince we were a people."—Yearly Meeting's written epiſtle, 1692.

But, notwithſtanding our peaceable and ſubmiſſive principles, in relation to thoſe who are placed in authority over us, we are far from being inſenſible to the value of civil and religious liberty. When

* *England.*

theſe are violated, we think it right to repreſent our grievances to thoſe who oppreſs us, or who have it in their power to afford relief. If this be done in a Chriſtian ſpirit, and in a language reſpectfully ſtrong, it would be found, in general, a much more ſucceſsful, and always a more proper, means of obtaining redreſs, than ſeditious and turbulent proceedings, or thoſe bloody appeals to the ſword, to which mankind are too apt to reſort, as the relief of oppreſſion, or the gratification of revenge.

CHAPTER XII.

ON DISCIPLINE.

Neceſſity of Diſcipline in religious Societies.—Objections to it anſwered.—Objects of our Diſcipline enumerated.—Different Meetings in which the Diſcipline is tranſacted.—Importance of tranſacting it in a right Spirit.

WHATEVER may be the inducement of any people to form themſelves into a ſeparate ſociety, it muſt be on ſome principles which they aſſume, and on the preſervation of which, their continuance as a particular ſociety, muſt, in a great meaſure, depend. It is alſo the duty of every ſociety, formed upon religious principles, to ſupport good morals, without which its pretenſions to religion are vain. Theſe two conſiderations render diſci-

pline, in a religious ſociety, neceſſary to its reputable exiſtence; and when they are not attended to, confuſion and diſgrace muſt be produced. However excellent any of our religious principles may be, we who profeſs them are all frail and fallible. We are all by nature prone to evil: and if we have even experienced ſome degree of redemption from the ſtate of fallen nature, we are ſtill liable, without watchfulneſs, to fall or to be drawn aſide in principle or practice. Hence we find, in all religious ſocieties, thoſe who are a diſcredit to their profeſſion; and we are far from conſidering ourſelves free from ſuch diſreputable members. But, in order to remedy this evil, as much as poſſible, we have a diſcipline eſtabliſhed amongſt us; the firſt object of which is, to labour in goſpel love, and by private advice, for the reformation of thoſe who walk diſorderly; and if this cannot be affected, and the nature of the caſe require it, to diſown ſuch perſons as members of our Society. The reaſonableneſs of this diſcipline appears ſo evident, that it may ſeem unneceſſary to enter into further arguments in favour of its propriety and utility; yet as objections are advanced againſt our practice in this reſpect, it may be proper to take ſome notice of them.

The objections commonly advanced againſt the exerciſe of diſcipline are, firſt, that it lays an unneceſſary reſtraint on private judgment; ſecondly, that it interferes with that attention to the dictates of the Spirit, to which we are individually recommended; and thirdly, that the diſowning of members is a ſpecies of perſecution.

The neceſſity of diſcipline, for the conſtitution and ſupport of any religious ſociety, has already been ſtated, ſo as, in a great meaſure, to obviate the firſt objection. It may, however, be proper to add, that in every ſociety, civil or religious, ſubmiſſion is neceſſary to the rules of that ſociety, in order to prevent the licentiouſneſs and confuſion which would follow, if every member acted upon his own ideas, without any external reſtriction. If this be applicable to ſociety in general, it is particularly ſo with regard to thoſe religious ſocieties, which have ſeparated from all others, on account of opinions and practices, that appear to them not conſiſtent with the nature of true religion; or unneceſſarily attached to it. How ſhall a ſociety retain its exiſtence, with any degree of propriety, if thoſe who depart from or diſavow its principles, are to remain members of it? And how ſhall ſuch a ſociety be known to the world, if its members ſhould be permitted to profeſs and act differently, even on ſubjects which at firſt formed the foundation of their union? It has been ſaid, that only immorality, and the fundamentals of religion, ſhould be the ſubjects of diſcipline. But, if we could agree on the application of the word immorality, the caſe would be very different with reſpect to the fundamentals of religion; and the number of perſons is perhaps not ſmall, who would reſolve theſe fundamentals into the belief of a God, and of the immortality of the ſoul. We may eaſily conſider what a ſtrange medley the liberty contended for would admit into one ſociety. The Jew, the Chriſtian, the Mahomedan and the Hea-

then, with their various ſubdiviſions, might all be blended together in one body; in which we may ſuppoſe, if any right zeal for their reſpective religious ſentiments ſhould exiſt, there would be perpetual jarring and diſcord. Much more conducive is it to the peace of religious ſocieties, that each ſhould conſiſtently maintain its own principles, and either ſuffer thoſe who diſſent from them, quietly to withdraw; or, after proper labour and waiting for reſtoration, to diſown them as acknowledged members of the ſociety. When this is done, as it ought to be, in a right ſpirit, it is no violation of true charity, nor of that liberty which all have, no doubt, a right to exerciſe with reſpect to private opinion.

The ſecond objection is often urged in a manner, which may tend to miſlead and captivate the unwary; but it proceeds on a ſuppoſition, which is by no means admiſſible, namely, that a body of Chriſtians, united in the belief of certain principles, is more likely to be miſled, than ſome of the individuals conſtituting that body. It has always been the judgment of our Society, that the eſtabliſhment of meetings for diſcipline was under the ſame divine influence, which originally formed our predeceſſors a diſtinct people. The ſubjects of the care of theſe meetings have varied very little from their firſt inſtitution; and, therefore, for any perſons now to pretend, that this diſcipline is an improper reſtraint on the leadings of the Spirit, ſo far as reſpects them, is to ſay, in effect, that they are not led by the ſame Spirit, in which the ſociety profeſſes to believe, and by which it deſires ever to

be led. "The ſpirits of the prophets are ſubject to the prophets;"* and the individuals of a religious ſociety muſt be ſubject to that ſociety collectively; otherwiſe anarchy and confuſion will enſue: and when it is conſidered, that in our ſociety a much greater proportion of its members concur in forming its rules, than in any other, there ſeems no room left for objections like this. They might have a more ſpecious appearance, if the power of making rules and regulations were lodged in a few individuals: though even in this caſe, they would be deſtitute of ſolidity, if the individuals were properly delegated.

The compariſon betwixt perſecution and the diſownment of the members of a religious ſociety, has been often zealouſly urged by ſome of the advocates for unreſtrained liberty of ſentiment. To draw this compariſon the ſtronger with reſpect to our ſociety, it has been urged, that they who are deprived of membership with us, beſides other privileges, loſe, if reduced to poverty, that proviſion for the ſupport and education of the poor, for which the ſociety is peculiarly diſtinguiſhed. But this argument, by proving too much, proves nothing: for even theſe latitudinarians would, I ſuppoſe, think it right to diſown a member for idolatry or atheiſm; and yet, on ſuch a one, it would not be proper to inflict what may be termed perſecution. But are we, becauſe we make extraordinary proviſion for our poor, to retain all that have been members, however they may differ from us

* 1 Cor. xiv. 32.

in principle or practice? The abſurdity of the argument appears to me too great to need further confutation. What is ſometimes advanced with reſpect to degradation of character by diſownment, it is apprehended, ſtands or falls with the former. If the ſociety has, by its general good conduct, obtained ſuch a degree of reputation, that thoſe who are diſowned by it, loſe part of the good opinion of the public; muſt it ſacrifice that reputation, by retaining in its boſom thoſe who violate its rules, or trample upon its principles: principles, for the ſupport of which, our predeceſſors in religious profeſſion, were willing to ſuffer much ignominy; with the loſs of property, of liberty, and even of life itſelf?

Beſides a general overſight of the conduct and converſation of our members, there are other objects which obtain attention in our meetings for diſcipline. One of the moſt material of theſe is, the ſupport of the poor: for it has been the practice in our ſociety, from its firſt eſtabliſhment, to maintain our own poor, and not give them occaſion to apply for the common modes of relief. Notwithſtanding this, we think it right to contribute to the ſupport of the poor who are not of our ſociety, in common with our neighbours; and that, not only in caſes where the laws oblige us; but alſo, when ability is afforded, in thoſe voluntary charities which are eſtabliſhed, or occaſionally promoted for the benefit of this part of the community: a claſs, to the ſuitable relief and employment of which, much importance is very properly attached.

Another material object in our meetings for diſcipline, is, due attention to proceedings in relation to marriage; to take care that the parties are clear of other engagements of the ſame kind; that they are not within diſallowed degrees of conſanguinity; and that, in caſe of previous marriage, the rights of former children be properly ſecured: after which, care is alſo exerciſed that the marriage be concluded in a proper and becoming manner.

The regiſter of theſe marriages; of births and burials; the care of our meeting-houſes and burial grounds; the admiſſion of members; the granting and receiving of certificates for thoſe who remove from one diſtrict to another; with divers other matters, alſo form the ſubjects of our care in theſe meetings.

The meetings in which theſe matters are tranſacted, are called Monthly meetings, from their being held once in every month. They ſend repreſentatives, and anſwer queries relative to the general conduct of their members, to other meetings, which are called Quarterly meetings; the principal buſineſs of which is to ſuperintend Monthly meetings, and to adviſe and aſſiſt them when occaſion may require. Theſe Quarterly meetings alſo ſend repreſentatives, and anſwer queries to a meeting which is called the Yearly meeting. This meeting has a general overſight of the ſociety; and makes rules for its government and welfare.

The importance of tranſacting this diſcipline in a right ſpirit, and by thoſe who may be properly qualified, has ever been felt as of no ſmall import-

ance to its right preſervation; and many are the advices which have been iſſued by the Yearly meeting on this ſubject. The following, being ſhort and comprehenſive, will, I apprehend, afford an inſtructive deſcription of our concern in this reſpect. "We tenderly exhort, that in all your meetings for the diſcipline of the church, you wait in humility, to have your ſpirits brought into ſubjection to the Spirit of Chriſt; that thereby you may be duly qualified for the work and ſervice conducive to the building up of his church; in which work, all who are engaged, ſhould be men of upright hearts and clean hands; rightly prepared for the ſervice they undertake." 1748.

CONCLUSION.

Addreſs to the Youth on the Remembrance of their Creator.—Reaſon and Revelation.—The Holy Scriptures and Chriſtianity.—Our peculiar Principles.—The Neceſſity of Regeneration.—Addreſs to Perſons not of our religious Perſuaſion.

IN the deſign and execution of this work, my mind has been much influenced by a deſire for the welfare of the youth of our ſociety, and for their inſtruction in the principles of true religion. To theſe I feel diſpoſed to addreſs myſelf in this concluſion.

Let me remind you, my dear friends, of that wiſe and pious injunction; "Remember thy Creator

in the days of thy youth."* Conſider his operations in nature and in grace; in providence and in redemption. Although in the conſideration of all theſe, ſome difficulties, not eaſily comprehended, may preſent themſelves; yet ſo much will be opened to the attentive mind, as will excite the love and fear of Him, "who made the heaven and the earth, the ſea, and all that therein is."† In entering into theſe conſiderations, there are two aſſiſtants afforded us, by our gracious Creator, Reaſon and Revelation. The former, as well as the latter, is uſeful on this occaſion. It is a faculty given us by God; and, if rightly exerciſed, will tend to promote our knowledge of Him, particularly in the works of creation and nature. When not miſled by the vanity of the human mind, reaſon ſees and feels its own imperfection; and readily embraces and ſubmits to thoſe advantages, which revelation affords. By revelation, I mean to comprehend both that which is mediate, and that which is immediate. The former is communicated in the holy Scriptures, in which we have very ample accounts of the being and nature of God; of his manifold works in creation and in providence; of his love to mankind, particularly in the work of redemption by Chriſt; and in affording the aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, to guide and direct into all neceſſary truth. It is by this ſpirit, which is called the Spirit of God, and of Chriſt, as proceeding from the Father and the Son, that immediate revelation is received. This revelation produces that knowledge of God and of Chriſt, on which

* Eccle. xii. 1. † Pſalm cxlvi. 6.

eternal life depends. In this ſenſe, "no man knoweth who the Father is, but the Son; and he to whom the Son will reveal him."* And when it pleaſes God to reveal his Son in any, and obedience is yielded to the heavenly viſion, theſe then become acquainted with the myſteries of God's kingdom; and are made ſenſible, that "fleſh and blood hath not revealed theſe things unto them; but their Father which is in Heaven."†

As the holy Scriptures are the bleſſed means of introducing us to an acquaintance with the way of life and ſalvation, and of affording us much inſtruction in our various duties to God, and one to another; I earneſtly preſs on you, my dear young friends, a frequent and ſerious peruſal of them. You will here find much profitable inſtruction of various kinds; the hiſtory is, beyond any other, important and intereſting; the myſtery "makes wiſe unto ſalvation."‡ Here you may ſee the various dealings of God with his creature man; you may be made acquainted with the diſpenſation of the law, the predictions of the prophets, the miniſtration of John, and the moſt glorious diſpenſation of the goſpel. Beware of ſuch publications as have a tendency to create a diſreliſh for theſe ſacred writings. Conſider what the ſtate of our religious knowledge would have been without them; and look at thoſe parts of the world, which have not had the benefit of the Scriptures; or in which the reading of them has been greatly reſtrained. When this compariſon is fairly made,

* Luke x. 22. † Matt. xvi. 17. ‡ 2 Tim. iii. 15.

I believe we shall find abundant cause to be thankful to the God and Father of all our mercies, for the benefit we enjoy, in having free access to those testimonials of his ways and will respecting the children of men, with which the Scriptures have made us acquainted. Let them be fairly compared with the various systems of religion in the world; and then, although there be some difficulties, which may not, at once, be fully comprehended (and in what science are there not such difficulties?) then, I say, the transcendent excellence of Christianity will be felt and acknowledged; and gratitude fill the heart, for the unmerited love of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Having fairly appreciated the general principles of Christianity, those which are peculiar to our religious society, and of which you make profession, will, I believe, rise in your view with esteem and attachment. Their consistency with the Christian religion has been already shown; and presuming you to be sensible of this consistency, I affectionately entreat you to be faithful in your adherence to them. Attend to that divine light, that saving grace, that good spirit, which is placed in your hearts; and which, if attended to, will preserve from the temptations incident to early life; and be your guide and support through the various trials and probations, which now, or hereafter, may be your allotment. Oh! my dear friends, receive this heavenly Visitant in the way of his coming. Give not up your minds to the pleasures and enjoyments of this world, which will draw away your obedient attention from things, which make for

true peace, and things by which you may edify one another. Be willing to take up the daily croſs; and to bear the yoke of him, who ſaid, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye ſhall find reſt to your ſouls; for my yoke is eaſy, and my burden light."* Let thoſe who have been habituated to ſinful or diſſipating pleaſures, and have afterwards been brought to taſte of the good word of life, and the powers of the world to come; let theſe ſay, whether more of the real comforts and enjoyments of life, are not to be experienced in the humility and ſelf-denial of a Chriſtian than in all the gratifications which ſin and folly afford. For when we take into conſideration the divine peace, which we are told, "paſſeth all underſtanding,"† and a degree of which is at times the experience of the faithful followers of a crucified Lord; with the comfortable proſpects of another and eternal ſtate of exiſtence; there will be found ſufficient inducements, in every reaſonable point of view, to prefer a life of religion and virtue, above that which is devoted to indulgence in the purſuits of folly, diſſipation, and ſin.

The ſame principle of divine light, which led our predeceſſors out of the vain and ſinful pleaſures of the world, alſo let them ſee the corruptions which had taken place in religious worſhip and miniſtry; the inconſiſtency of war with the goſpel diſpenſation; and the impropriety of divers other matters, in the external deportment of profeſſing Chriſtians.

* Matt. xi. 29. 30. † Phil. iv. 7.

For their teſtimony on theſe accounts and the conduct conſequent upon them, they ſuffered deeply; in an age, when religious liberty was claimed by all, but given by few or none, who came into the poſſeſſion of power. Read the relations of the patient ſuffering for the cauſe of truth, and the teſtimony of Jeſus, of thoſe who have gone before you;* and faithfully bear your teſtimony, even in thoſe things, that you may be ready to call little. Let not the ſingularity, which a conduct conſiſtent with your principles may produce, diſcourage you from a faithful adherence to them; but ſubmit to bear that croſs, which will crucify you to the world and the world to you, and redeem you from the various corruptions, with which it abounds. The principles of our ſociety are now ſo reſpectfully treated, that the temptation to deſert them is much leſſened. Prize your privileges; conſider how differently our fore-fathers were circumſtanced; and let this conſideration excite in your minds, increaſing faithfulneſs and dedication to all parts of your religious duty. Follow the example of our bleſſed Redeemer, remember the reproaches which he endured, and be willing to take up the croſs and deſpiſe the ſhame. Then you may become partakers of that crown of righteouſneſs, which is the reward of all who have fought the good fight, and kept the faith; and who love his appearance.

* The Author not only wiſhes to turn the attention of Youth to the ſufferings of our own ſociety; but alſo to thoſe of the primitive Chriſtians, and of the reformers from Popery.

Before I conclude this addreſs, I wiſh a little further to open the ſubject of Chriſtian redemption, ſo far at leaſt as to turn your attention to that work, which the depraved ſtate of human nature renders univerſally neceſſary; and in which our Lord inſtructed a ruler among the Jews; "Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God."* Whatever our religious profeſſion, whatever our outward appearance and demeanour may be; all will fail to procure us divine favour and acceptance if the heart is not renewed after the image of Him that created us. "Marvel not that I ſaid unto thee, ye muſt be born again."† This was the language in which our Saviour repeatedly inculcated this doctrine to Nicodemus; and Oh! my dear young friends! neither marvel at it, nor withdraw from it. Examine the ſtate of your own hearts, and the occaſion for it will ſoon be ſeen and felt. Dwell therefore, I entreat you, under thoſe divine convictions and influences, by which "the waſhing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt,"‡ are experienced. The work is generally ſlow and gradual; therefore be not diſcouraged, if you cannot always perceive its progreſs: but as you abide patiently under a right exerciſe of mind, you will find that the work will in time proceed until the new creation in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works is known. But when this is in meaſure attained; ſtill watchfulneſs and prayer ſhould be the companions of every mind. The command to watchfulneſs is of univerſal extent. "What I ſay unto

* John iii. 3. † John iii. 7. ‡ Titus iii. 5.

you, I ſay unto all, watch."* Again, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation."§ When this diſpoſition of mind is rightly abode in, it preſerves from formality in religion; keeps the ſoul alive to God; and makes living members and bright examples in his church, and among his people. In this ſtate of religious exerciſe, the experience of the primitive believers is attained; "By one ſpirit are we baptized into one body;—and made to drink into one ſpirit."† Here alſo, right qualifications are received for religious ſervice, and a capacity to fill up the meaſure of ſuffering or labour, which may be allotted in the church of Chriſt: a church, the members of which are thus deſcribed by an inſpired apoſtle; "Ye alſo as lively ſtones, are built up a ſpiritual houſe, an holy prieſthood, to offer up ſpiritual ſacrifices, acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt."‡

As one of the objects of this publication, is to convey information to perſons who are not of our religious perſuaſion; I requeſt that they would follow the example of the noble Bereans; and "ſearch the ſcriptures whether thoſe things are ſo."** It is not probable that we ſhall all be brought to think alike on theſe ſubjects; but if we can ſee, that ſo much may be ſaid by thoſe from whom we differ, as to produce an increaſe of Chriſtian charity, ſomething important is gained. I am not a favourer of that falſe charity, which would deſtroy all religious zeal, and make all profeſſions

* Mark xiii. 37. § Matt. xxvi. 41.
† 1 Cor. xii. 13. ‡ 1 Peter ii. 5. ** Acts xvii. 11.

of religion immaterial. "Let every man be fully perſuaded in his own mind;"* and having endeavoured to obtain that perſuaſion from due conſideration; let him ſupport it with zeal, tempered with the meekneſs of wiſdom. Thus, notwithſtanding the variety of opinions into which the Chriſtian world is divided, the light of the goſpel may increaſe in the earth; and we may together promote the coming of that day, in which the divine promiſe and prediction will be fulfilled: "From the riſing of the ſun, even unto the going down of the ſame, my name ſhall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place, incenſe ſhall be offered unto my name; and a pure offering."† Then will "the kingdoms of this world, become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Chriſt; and he ſhall reign for ever and ever."‡

* Rom. xiv. 5. † Mal. i. 11.
‡ Rev. xi. 15.

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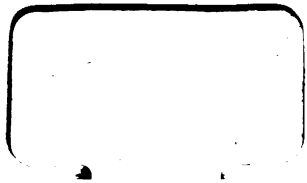
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